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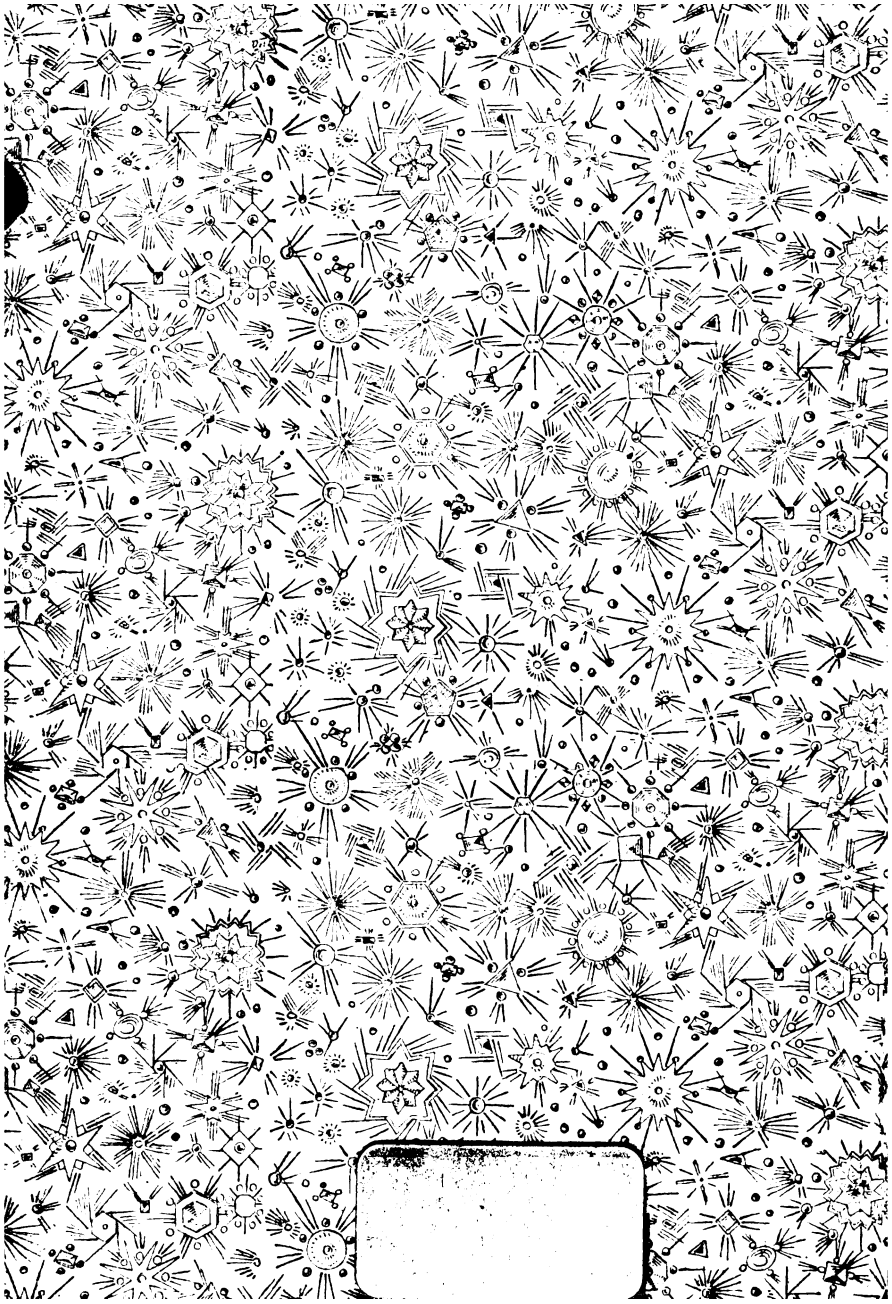

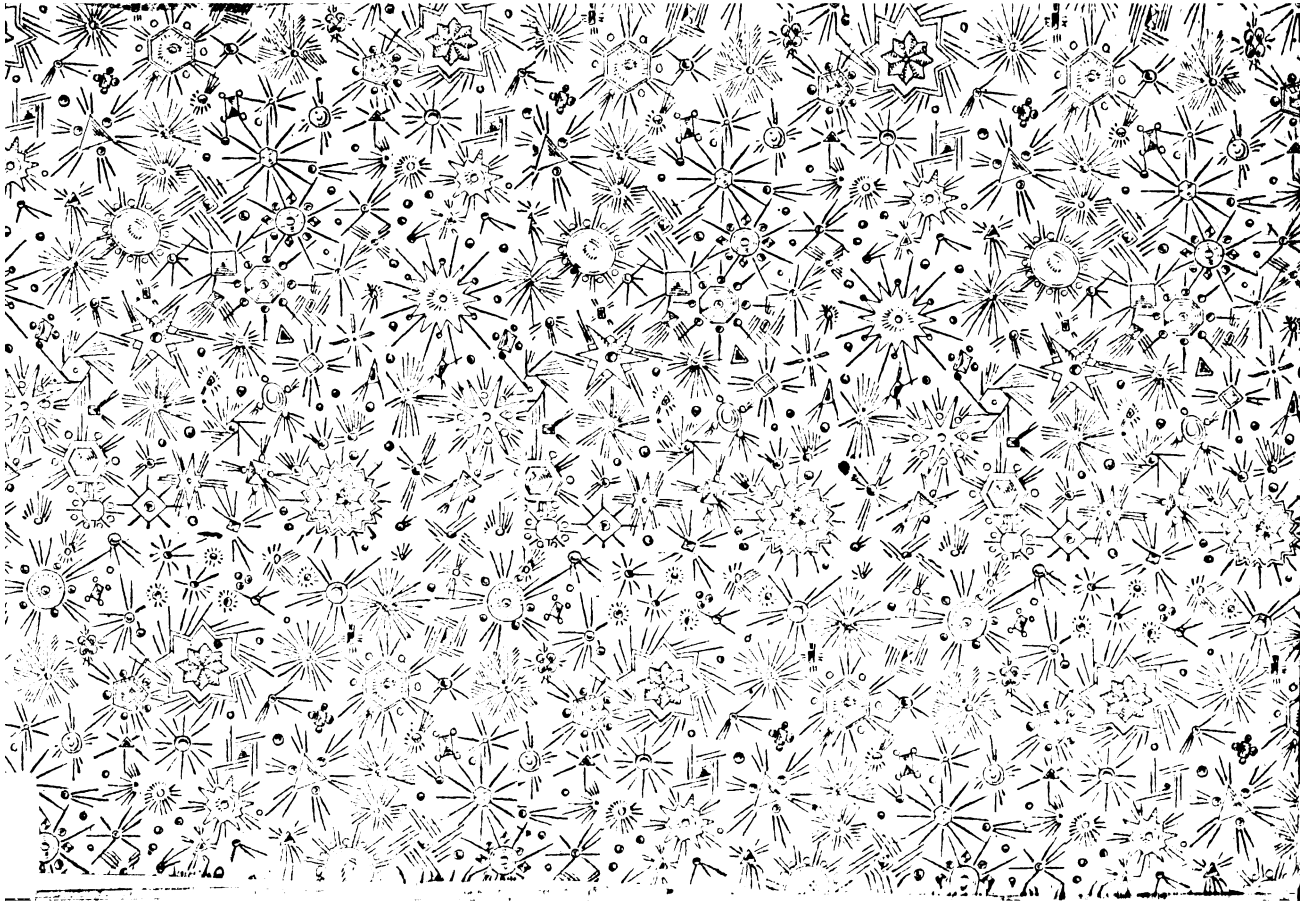

1. Poetry, Miscellaneous

Perry

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To My Mother.

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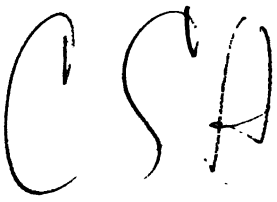

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

ENCHANTMENT.

The sails we see on the ocean,
  Are as white as white can be;
But never one in the harbor,
  As white as the sails at sea.

The clouds that crown the mountains
  With purple and golden light,
Turn to cold gray mist and vapor,
  Ere ever we reach the height.

The mountains wear crowns of glory,
  Only when seen from afar;
And the sails lose all their whiteness,
  Inside of the harbor bar.

Oh, Distance, thou dear enchanter,
  Still hold in thy magic veil,
The glory of far-off mountains,
  The gleam of the far-off sail!

Hide in thy robes of splendor,
O, mountain gold and gray!
O, sail in thy snowy whiteness,
Come not into port, I pray.

INGRATITUDE.

Not in her open palm doth nature bear
  Her precious ores, her silver and her gold;
  Not on her brow, nor on her garments' fold,
Doth she with flaunting pride her jewels wear.

But deep within the breast that makes no sign,
  She hides a world's desire, a world's delight;
  In silence calm and utter as the night,
Waiting their day, the king's crown jewels shine.

And not until her breast, with cruel blows,
  Is cut and torn, not till her gracious heart,
  By skill's persistent hand is torn apart,
Doth she her royal opulence disclose.

To every life that holds a secret vein
  Of wealth the great world needs is sorrow drawn
  As lightning to the tree, birds to the dawn,
With all her servants following in her train,

Pale Want and Woe and heavy-footed Care,
She bears upon that life, until, at last,
As nature answers to the rending blast,
The riches of the spirit are laid bare.

Though gold and gems have neither flaw nor stain,
And though life, grown a thing strong, grand and sweet,
Casts sacred treasures at the world's glad feet,
We raise no altars to the god of Pain.

"THAT BIT OF LACE."

I.

Behind a little silken mesh of lace,
That hides and yet reveals, I see her face;
The filmy web doth not obstruct my view;
With softened grace her beauty shineth through;
Eyes large and luminous, sweet lips aglow,
Fair waving tresses on a brow of snow.
So many charms the little net reveals,
Can there be one I wonder it conceals?
So, wondering oft, a longing doth assail
My very soul, to tear away her veil;
So foolish! Well I know her radiant face,
Is all the fairer for that bit of lace.

II.

Behind a winning, baffling veil of pride,
Intangible, yet real, her heart doth hide;
The subtle veil no single grace doth mar,
Her truth and love shine through, yet doth it bar

My too audacious eyes; though many a day,
I fain would tear the torturing thing away
And see her soul. I will be wise; who knows?
The bud hath beauty that the open rose
Hath lost forevermore; there is no room
For sweet conjecture o'er a rose in bloom;
May be I love her more for that sweet pride,
Behind whose strength her loving heart doth hide.

ONLY AN HOUR AGO.

Only an hour ago she spoke my name,
And now the sweetest words that love can frame,
Or harsh reproach, to her are all the same.

'Mid locks where yellow sunbeams find their kin,
In the dear hand so pulseless and so thin,
Over the heart so pure, so free from sin,

I place these flowers for since she loved them so,
She will be glad to take beneath the snow
A little of their tender grace and glow.

For when I saw her first a rosebud fair
Lay in the meshes of her yellow hair;
For memory's sake I place another there.

Perhaps she knows — for there be those who say
That this strange something that has gone away,
Lingers awhile beside the cast-off clay.

If this be true she knows the grief I feel;
Can she not find some way to break the seal?
Some way her loving presence to reveal?

But she lies still and cold and makes no sign,
O, who this wondrous mystery can define?
Only a breath between her world and mine.

They say she lives — I kneel beside the clay;
They call her dead, yet living far away;
O! what is life, and what is death, I pray?

RECOMPENSE.

The earth gives us treasure four-fold for all that we
give to its bosom;
The care we bestow on the plant comes back in the
bud and the blossom.

The sun draws the sea to the sky, O, stillest and
strangest of powers,
And returns to the hills and the meadows the glad-
ness of bountiful showers.

The mother regains her lost youth in the beauty and
youth of her daughters,
We are fed after many long days by the bread that
we cast on the waters.

Never a joy do we cause but we for that joy are the
gladder,
Never a heart do we grieve but we for the grieving
are sadder.

Never a slander so vile as the lips of the willing rehearser.
And curses, though long, loud and deep, come home to abide with the curser.

He who doth give of his best, of that best is the certainest user,
And he who withholds finds himself of his gaining the pitiful loser.

The flowers that are strewn for the dead bloom first in the heart of the living,
And this is the truest of truths, that the best of a gift is the giving.

FROM THE HIGHWAYS.

I.

Vice clad in silken garments walks the highways of the earth,
And she tramples upon Virtue as a thing of little worth.
She hath fame, and wealth, and honor, and is garlanded with flowers,
She is fair as morning sunshine, as the green earth after showers;
She hath laughter and rejoicing, and the homage of men's eyes,
And they kneel before her presence, prince and peasant, great and wise;
She hath purple and fine linen, she hath gems upon her hair,
Whose robe should be of sackcloth, whose crown should be despair.

She is strong in baleful beauty, and her smile is soft
and sweet,
And the helpless fall before her, in the palace and the
street,
And she weareth webs of luring for the weak, unwary
feet.
In her deadly, cruel kindness, in her smiling insolence,
Her soft, sure grasp she placeth on the throat of In-
nocence—
Of Innocence and Weakness—and the anguish of
their cries
Is lost amid the laughter of her heartless votaries.
She giveth tears for joy, and for light she giveth gloom,
She makes merchandise of honor and defiles the hearth
and home.

II.

And she says, Lo! I am mighty, and I sit upon a
throne,
The great ones are my helpers and the world is all
our own.

Though my soul be red with slaughter, yet my garments show no spot,
Men do my ready bidding, and the Lord God hath forgot.
But in some mighty moment, when her heart is high and strong,
The Lord sends his avengers with the whip and scourge and thong;
With valiant hands that fear not, with hearts all undismayed,
For the souls that she hath tempted, for the souls she hath betrayed;
For the desecrated hearthstones, for the hopeless souls that sit
In the cruel gilded bondage of Love's loathsome counterfeit;
They beat upon her strongholds, they discover all her shame,
And she stands revealed in vileness, and men shudder at her name.

III.

O noble, true defenders of the helpless and the weak,
Strong be your hands for rescue, brave be the words you speak!
O! cry aloud and spare not, though she sitteth on a throne,
Though the great ones stand beside her and the world seems all her own;
Bid her know that God remembers, that, though Virtue suffereth long,
Justice, tireless and eternal, follows fast the feet of Wrong.
Bid her know though men defend her whom the world misplaces first,
Man to manhood true and loyal, calls her evermore accursed.

ALWAYS MINE.

You say the joy that has just come to me,
To crown my life with glory and with grace
Will perish, leaving but the agony
Of loss in its dear place.

And that 'twere better to forego the bliss,
And so be spared the loss. I tell you nay:
Because the night is coming, must I miss
The brightness of the day?

But yesterday the flowers and birds were here,
To-day I watch the whirling, drifting snows;
Nor am I saddened thinking of the dear
Departed bird and rose.

Give me the gorgeous skies, the sweet perfume
Of flowers, aye, all the royal summer's charms,
Though I must see her, robbed of all her bloom,
Die in the winter's arms.

I would not take your little negative
Delights; I have no petty fear of death;
Life is not worth the living, if to live
Means just to draw the breath.

No doubt my feet will tread the valley's ways,
My eyes will dwell on lesser lower sights;
But ah! they can not rob me—those drear days—
Of this day on the heights.

MARGARET.

Beauty she had not, neither place nor state;
  Not hers the gracious gifts that women prize,
  In learning of the schools she was not wise,
She was not anything the world calls great.

Yet, in the quaint old Southern city, where
  She lived and wrought, in polished marble set,
  Comrade of Jackson, Clay and Lafayette,
Her statue rises clean and white and fair.

Who was she, thus to win such comradeship?
  Who was she, thus to be immortalized
  With the beloved, honored, idolized
Great names forever more on history's lip?

A woman who made bread, who at her stall
  Or by her bake-shop door sat day by day,
  Selling her wares in simple, honest way;
A very humble woman—that was all.

But everywhere the orphan children say,
"She was our mother," and the city's poor
Cry out, "'Twas she who blessed our hapless door,"
While, from the past, the soldiers, blue and gray,

Do speak her praise, and every noble cause
Declares, "she was our helper;" every need
Whispers, "she knew not any class or creed,
But listened always to love's higher laws."

And so she died, and so the people set
Amid their heroes—with a proud consent—
This simple woman—crowned monument,
And carved thereon the one word, Margaret.

O, gracious city! he who runneth reads
Your pride in patriot fire, in martial fame;
But in the place you give this humble name,
You prove your faith in love's diviner deeds.

THE TEST.

It looks a goodly ship; the favoring breeze
  Filling its sails; above, the cloudless sky,
  The peaceful sea beneath, no danger nigh;
It is a goodly ship, but not by these
'Tis judged. Wait till the storm-king frees
  Its ministers—the winds, the waves, the shock
  Of mountain billows, and the treacherous rock
Shall say if it be strong to ride the seas.

Not till the heavy storms of life have sought
  Vainly to whelm; not till the waves of wrong,
Sorrow and loss, despair and doubt have fought
  For mastery; not till the siren throng
In vain their all-entrancing wiles have wrought,
  Dare any soul to say: Lo! I am strong.

ONE DAY.

It comes to all, this terrible "one day,"
The day when all the world seems tempest-torn,
And desolation on swift pinions borne,
Makes all fair things its prey.

You can remember when your one day came;
To other eyes it was like other days,
And you have walked since then the self-same ways,
And never said his name.

Yet the deep terror of that one day left
You stricken as the lightning leaves the tree;
Wrecked as the tempest leaves the ship at sea,
Of every hope bereft.

To you it came when bowed above the bed,
You kissed unanswering lips and felt that all
Glad things with her were lying 'neath a pall,
And God himself seemed dead.

And yours? It was when with a sinking breath
You read disloyalty in trusted eyes,
Learning with unbelieving slow surprise,
That there are sadder things than death.

Your days have been all bright? If that be true,
I am not sure that I am glad. I know
Yours is the common heritage, and so
Your dark day waits for you.

COMMUNION.

I sit beside my happy hearth,
And yet in paths of dole and dearth,
With you I wander o'er the earth.

I look in eyes with love ashine,
I join the dance, I taste the wine,
I pray, and yet from song or shrine

With you, dear Heart, in thought I go,
In all your wand'rings to and fro,
Where fierce suns shine and fierce winds blow.

I feel the bitter storms that beat
Upon your head; the rain and sleet,
And all the thorns beneath your feet.

I shiver with your cold, I weep
Your tears, and while they say I sleep,
With your dead dreams my watch I keep.

With all your burdens do I cope,
I pray your prayers, with you I hope,
In all your darkness, love, I grope.

I share with you all dread and dole;
The waters of despair that roll
Above you, overwhelm my soul.

Your smallest choosing is my choice,
In all your triumphs I rejoice,
In all your songs lift up my voice.

So on the sea or on the land,
I stand in spirit where you stand,
And in the spirit clasp your hand.

WISDOM.

She doth not flaunt her treasures in the face,
Nor thrust them in the undesiring hand;
Nor doth she at the imperious command
Of swift, unthinking lips, unveil her grace.
Who sees aright, the hidden spring may trace
Where dull eyes see but wastes of barren land;
So to the seeking souls that understand,
Doth she disclose her blest abiding place.

And, as the cooling spring, once found, doth rise
With bountiful responsiveness to meet
And bless the patient digger, so, at length,
She doth her faithful followers recognize,
And unto these alone yields up the sweet
Eternal beauty of her truth and strength.

WHAT GAIN?

The woman across the way,
The world knows not her name—
She never hath dreamed of fame—
She is fair as the flowers of May.

She says, it were surely grand,
That the songs one sings should go
To the hearts of the high and the low,
The length and breadth of the land.

Sweet and blest it must be,
To hear the voices of praise
Come up from the world's wide ways,
Because of such minstrelsy.

But, if from the voices that come,
I miss the sweetest, what gain
Can atone for the loss and the pain,
If the dearest of lips be dumb?

And tell me, when all is done,
Do you think in the many's praise,
In what honor may crown my days,
I am paid for the silence of one?

THE UNBIDDEN GUEST.

Within my home that empty seemed, I sat
And prayed for greater blessings. All
That was mine own seemed poor and sadly small,
And I cried rebelliously for that

I had not, saying, if the good that gold
Can bring were mine, journeys in far-off lands,
With rest to weary feet, to burdened hands—
If love, the love I crave, would come and fold

Its arms around me, then would joy abide
With me forever; peace would come to bless,
And life would round out from this narrowness,
Into a fullness new and sweet and wide.

And so I fretted 'gainst my simple lot;
And so I pined for broader, fairer ways,
Making a burden of the very days,
In mad regret for that which I had not.

And then one came unto my humble door,
And asked to enter. "Art thou love?" I cried,
"Or wealth or fame? Else shalt thou be denied."
She answered, "Nay, my child, but I am more.

"Open to me, I pray; make me thy guest,
And thou wilt find, although no gift of gold,
Or fame or wealth within my hand I hold,
That with my coming cometh all the best

"That thou hast longed for." Fair, though grave her face;
Soft was her voice, and in her steadfast eyes,
I saw the look of one both true and wise.
My heart was sore, and so, with tardy grace

I bade her enter. How transfigured
Seemed now the faithful love that at my feet
So long had lain unprized; how wide and sweet
Shone the small paths wherein I had been led.

Duty grew beautiful; with calm consent
I saw the distant wealth of land and sea;
And all fair things seemed given unto me,
The hour I clasped the hand of dear Content.

OUR EASTER DAY.

When is our Easter? Nay, nor book nor creed
  Can tell for you nor me.
Though over all the land, with joyous speed,
  The bells ring merrily.

For we may kneel by altars hung with flowers,
  Flowers with no thorn's alloy,
And still the Lenten sorrow may be ours,
  But not the Easter joy.

It is that day the soul casts off its chain—
  For souls know bond and prison—
It is that day when Doubt and Hate are slain,
  And Faith and Love are risen.

When to the heart's neglected garden-plot,
  Comes Joy's awakening ray;
When from some grave that human eyes see not
  The stone is rolled away

When with clear eyes we see the mountain height
Above the mist that bars;
When through the clouds we see the constant light
Of Truth's eternal stars.

And though, because of this, no glad bells ring;
Though neither song nor prayer
Are heard of men; though no sweet censors swing
Their odors on the air;

Though on no altar builded by men's hand
Bloom violet or rose;
Though all the pulses of the teeming land,
Beat softly 'neath the snows;

Still do we know, unhelped of book or creed,
Though other lips gainsay,
That we have won our life's supremest need,
Our own true Easter day.

HER HAPPIER LOT.

To that strange city on the hill—
My heart by its great sorrow led—
With grievings that no faith could still,
I came, my gift of flowers to spread,
My tears to shed.

Lo! in that city strange and fair,
Whose restful paths to-day I trod,
Lay, like a blessing everywhere,
On shaded street and flower-strewn sod,
The peace of God.

Afar, the river, like a thread
Of silver, poured, and farther down
Lay fields that had been harvested;
And autumn leaves, red, gold and brown,
Made earth a crown.

And farther still, a city where
Men go about with smiling eyes,
The while their souls great burdens bear;
And mingled moans and songs and sighs
From pale lips rise.

And in that city down below,
Men note the yield of yellow grain,
And watch the silvery stream, and know
That blight or bloom or rise or wane
Means loss or gain.

Down there they clasp each other's hand,
And vainly try to dull the ear
Against the pitiless command,
Which some sure day all men must hear,
And all men fear.

But in this city no one says,
"To-morrow or to-day, maybe,
I too must start on unknown ways,
Or you to dread uncertainty
Will go from me."

They do not reck of fertile fields,
They care not in their peace divine,
For shrunken streams or stinted yields—
They never ask for any sign
Of oil or wine.

They do not mourn o'er vanished dreams,
Nor weep for fame or love unwon,
Nor long for that which only seems;
They do not sigh at set of sun
For work not done.

But here the happy dwellers know
Not any burden, pain or loss;
They do not wander to and fro
To hide a hurt or grief or cross
Beneath the moss.

Here every bosom, worn and sad,
Hath found for every wound a balm,
And tired hands and feet are glad,
In the serene and perfect calm—
God's gracious alm.

Oh! fair, sweet city, dare I ask
Her back where sorrows never cease?
Back to the pain and care and task,
After the long desired release
Has wrought this peace?

I lay these flowers on her breast,
And whisper, trusting that she hears,
"Dear Heart! be thine the utter rest,
The smiles of the unending years,
Though mine the tears."

COMPLETENESS.

Because it is fair shall the rosebud keep
Its possible loveliness folded up?
Would you have the pride of the forest sleep,
For fear of spoiling the acorn cup?

Nay, the bud hath dreams of the perfect flower,
The acorn thrills with divine unrest;
The one must blossom when comes its hour,
The other follow its high behest.

True, they do perish. 'Tis ever so,
This law unerring all nature knows.
The acorn and the bud are slain, but lo,
The pride of the forest, and lo, the rose!

GIVING AND GAINING.

Though the river to the sea
    Is forever flowing,
Though the blossom greets the bee
    All its sweets bestowing,
Still the river floweth fleet,
Still the rose's heart is sweet.

'Tis the grand eternal law,
    Giving is but gaining;
Nature knows no single flaw
    In her wise ordaining.
He who gives, 'mid bounty, stands,
Who withholds, hath empty hands.

IN ANY LAND.

I in a Northern land, and you
    Where the Southern cross gleams overhead;
But we've drunk of the self-same cup—we two,
    We've eaten both of the self-same bread;
Purple wine and the friendly pledge,
Bitter fruit and the teeth on edge.

I where the white snows drift, and you
    Where fadeless beauty and bloom are spread;
But my soul has bathed in the gracious dew
    That into your thirsty soul is shed;
I in the North and you in the South,
We have shared the flood, we have shared the drouth.

I where the summer flies, and you
    Where never the summer time is dead;
But we wandered both the darkness through,
    On the same sharp thorns our feet have bled;
From the same still heights we've watched afar,
The same white sail, the same white star.

Better than I could ask or dream; this was my prayer, and now,
That she is lying white and still, with God's peace on her brow,
I wonder, sobbing, sore dismayed, if this be that for which I prayed.

THE GARDEN OF LONG AGO.

I've a garden, fair and bright,
  Crowned with a glad completeness;
There's never a hint of blight
In the red of the rose, of the white
  Of the lily's mystical sweetness,
In that garden fair and bright.

Into that garden I go,
  Whatever may be the weather;
Whether fair or fierce winds blow,
And the earth wears grass or snow,
  I and my heart together,
Into that garden go.

And there, though the skies be gray
  We slip the great world's tether;
And while 'mid the bloom we stray,
We deem 'tis the rosy May,
  I and my heart together,
Though the skies be dull and gray.

And we shut the great world out—
The world with its work and worry—
Its troubles and care and doubt,
Its moan and sigh and shout,
Its weariness, rush and hurry;
We shut the great world out.

And back from its grace and bloom,
We bring of its helpful beauty,
Some heart's ease for days to come,
Some light for the days of gloom·
Some strength for the coming duty
We bring from its grace and bloom.

And the friends that we love the best
Look up in our eyes and wonder;
Not knowing what peace and rest
We have found in that garden blest;
So close, yet so far asunder,
Live the friends that love the best.

You know it, this garden fair,
O weary sisters and brothers!
Slipping the leash of care,
Often you wander there,

Unseen, unknown of others,
You know what fair winds blow,
What immortal flowers grow
In the garden of Long Ago.

THE WINE IS SWEET AND THE WORLD IS FAIR.

Who from the hand of life has won,
The gift he seeks? And who can say,
When the night comes down to clasp the day,
That all he has sought to do is done?

Who can say that the cup he quaffs
Is always sweet, and who but knows
That his path is haunted by waiting woes,
What time he dances and sings and laughs.

Who does not know that pleasure shares
The kingdom with pain, and who but feels
Cold in his face what time he kneels,
The breath of his own unanswered prayers.

All men know that friendship flies,
Ere we've held its hand but a moment's space;
While hatred clasps with a strong embrace,
And looks in our own with deathless eyes.

What shall we say? That all is loss,
That life is barren and cold and vain,
With never a joy to atone for the pain,
With never a crown so great as the cross,

With never a love that is true and sweet,
With never a friendship true and strong,
With never a grand, triumphant song,
For evil trodden beneath the feet?

Nay, the wine is sweet, and the world is fair,
Though bitter the lees, though the tempest mars;
And love is true and the night hath stars,
Though the soul is mantled in dark despair.

The mills of the gods grind sure though slow,
The mists and vapors of earth uprise
And make a glory for all the skies;
And out of the grave-dust violets grow.

POSSIBILITY.

Our wishes, it is said, do measure just,
Our capabilities. Who with his might
Aspires unto the mountain's upper height,
Holds in that aspiration a great trust
To be fulfilled; a warrant that he must
Not disregard. A strength to reach the height
To which his hopes have taken happy flight.
Remember, when these dreams and longings thrust
Themselves, God-bidden, in your face, that each
And every dream clasps some reality;
The height your hope hath found your feet may reach;
And every wish is but a prophecy
(Although your fears refuse it open speech)
Of what you have the power to do and be.

HER EYES AND MINE.

Her eyes are quicker than my own to see
The one worm-eaten leaf upon the rose,
Or the one flaw the diamond faintly shows,
She says, when I have grown as wise as she,
I will not prate of snowy sails, nor be
Deceived by the delusive light that glows
Upon the distant hills, she knows, she knows,
And for my ignorance she pities me.

I see the rose's beauty, not its blight,
The jewel's flash and gleam, the crown that lies
Upon the hills, to me the sails are white.
Such pure delight comes to me through my eyes,
I do not even wish her keener sight,
And think it must be sad to be so wise.

FROM BARREN LANDS.

Our lives have held too many bounties, and,
In spite of fate's bestowing,
To-day, we do not hold within the hand
Aught that is worth the showing.

We know that daily farther do we stray
From gold that waits the mining;
That still more distant from our feet to-day
The mountain-heights are shining.

Too many times we've drained love's sacred wine
Sad truth the heart discloses;
Too many times your careless feet and mine
Have trodden down the roses.

'Tis he for whom love's cup but once is filled,
Who knows its utter sweetness;
Who plucks a single rose is longest thrilled
With its divine completeness.

'Tis oft the empty hand that offereth
The costliest sacrifices;
'Tis out of some despised Nazareth
The living light arises.

Not for our sowing do the fruitful days
Scatter their bloom before us;
'Tis not our happy careless lips that raise
The hallelujah chorus.

But, lo! the glad earth oft from sterile soil
Sees fadeless flowers upspringing,
And hears from smileless lips 'mid want and toil,
Joy's deathless anthems ringing.

LOSS OR GAIN?

You weigh each motive and read the laws
For the baby's breath and the madman's freak
And seek of science the mighty cause
For the blush on a maiden's cheek.

You sagely measure and count and spell,
To learn of the secret soul of things;
You break the heart of the exiled shell,
To learn of the song it sings.

With curious wonder and soulless smile,
You prompt the coming of song or sob;
With careful fingers note meanwhile,
The pulse's quickened throb.

What have you gained, though your searching eyes
Detect in the gold its speck of dross;
Or see the dullness that underlies
The glamor, bloom and gloss?

What have you gained, though yours to know
  Each subtle motive and silent force?
Though the smiles of joy or the tears of woe
  You trace to their hidden source?

This, that never although with tears
  You seek and pray, will there ever come
Back again to your barren years,
  The vanished joy and bloom.

Though you be wiser than other men,
  For your sad success you have only found
That never for you in life again,
  Will the hills be glory-crowned.

Never again in the fairest face,
  To see the beauty that lights and leads;
Never again the unquestioned grace,
  Of high and holy deeds.

And you know when all is over and done,
  Disappointed and sorrow-crost,
That something better than you have won
  Out of your life is lost.

RECONCILIATION.

We crown the unconscious brow with wreath of bays;
We press in pulseless hands the sweetest flowers;
When all unneeded any word of ours,
We give a willing voice to loving praise
For which, perhaps, through weary, unblessed days,
The dear one hungered. We are slow to prove
The faithfulness and fervor of our love,
Until that day, when loving word or phrase
Come all too late; then we pray Heaven to guide
Henceforth to freer giving for Love's sake.
May it not be that on the other side
They wait for us, and like us, long to make
The sad wrong's right, ready to give and take,
The hand-clasps and the kisses here denied?

THE TURN O' THE TIDE.

Ere the gold and purple of sunset has faded and turned to gray,
Be wise, O friend of my heart, and turn your eyes away.

Turn away from the brook while gladly its full tide rushes by,
From the young moon e'er its silver is lost in the depths of sky.

Turn away from the sweetest music while yet it is sweet to the ear;
Leave the woods and fields and meadows ere yet they are brown and sere.

Leave the rose with the bloom upon it, the lily with leaf unsoiled;
Let ever the wine-cup's sweetness be by the lees unspoiled.

While Love is sweet and gracious look in his face and say,
I own you dear and fair, therefore depart, I pray.

Bitter the lees of the wine, unsightly the dry brook's bed;
Somber and sere the forest when all of its bloom is dead.

After the royal sunset, chilling and dull the gloom;
The strewn leaves' pallid beauty after the gathered bloom.

After the watched-out moonlight the night is heavy and long;
Quickly the spell is broken that follows the sweetest song.

After love's full fruition, O friend of my heart, who knows?
Lo! the music, the wine, the sunset, the lily, the leaf, the rose!

THE HAPPIER DOCTRINE.

You preach the gospel of not enough; you sagely say
While the wine is sweet to the taste, 'twere better to
put away

The cup from the eager lips; while music and song
entrance,
'Twere best to turn from both for fear of the surfeit's
mischance.

Lest the faded wreath and the waning tapers vex the
sight,
You bid me leave the feast with the mirth at its height.

You bid me forswear the rose because of its beauty's
fleetness,
Because dear love hath dole you bid me despise its
sweetness.

Or else, you wisely say, I will sit at the last with the
taste
Of the bitter lees in my mouth, in the ruin and waste

Of pleasure all outworn, from peace forever apart,
With the withered rose in my hand and its thorn in my heart.

You say I will sit in sackcloth with ashes upon my head,
And mourn for the silenced song and the love that is dead.

Ah! this may be best for you, I own you are very wise,
But how, I pray, can I walk by the light of your eyes?

Let me fill my hands with roses though all you say be true;
I will risk the prick of the thorn and the perished dew.

Let me fill my life with love, tender and true and strong;
Let me feast my soul on beauty and music and mirth and song.

Though laughter end in tears and music and mirth prove fleet,
Though beauty fades before me, and love is slain at my feet,

I will not weakly mourn when all these joys are
flown,
But will rather bravely say thank God for the joys
I've known!

Thank God that of a knowledge absolute and com-
plete,
I can say that the rose hath beauty, and love and
laughter are sweet.

TOO LATE.

Now that her eyes are hid in death's eclipse,
We give her tears and smiles; now that the crown
Of God's great love is hers, we bow us down,
And press our small love sign upon her lips.

We bring her beauty; weary, unblessed hours
Were hers; now that from out her gloom
She hath passed on to fields of fadeless bloom,
We come and bring our little gift of flowers.

We give her praise; now that she doth not heed,
So great her peace, what any lips can say,
We come and speak the praise above her clay,
That we denied her in her sorest need.

If, as some deem, the spirit lingers near
Its empty house awhile, I think she must
Wonder to find her soul-deserted dust
Grown suddenly so very strangely dear.

IN THE HAMMOCK.

Backward and forward the hammock swings,
Out in the garden under the tree;
Bees and blossoms and flashing wings,—
Fairest things in the world that be—
Bright green grass and reddening clover,
With the beautiful blue sky bending over,
Flossy sees as she sings and swings,
Out in the hammock under the tree.

The butterflies flutter in airy fleetness,
Like blossoms of purple and blue and gold;
The bees go humming, their stores of sweetness,
Carrying home to the honey-fold.
The lilies bloom in their own sweet way,
A perfect flower for a perfect day.
This Flossy sees as she sings and swings,
Out in the hammock under the tree.

She hears the music of waters flowing.
  The sweet small tumults amid the trees;
The myriad murmurings, coming, going,
  Hither and thither on every breeze.
She is glad with the gladness of bee and bird,
  Glad with the gladness that needs no word;
She is one with all beautiful things and gay,
  She is one with beauty and love to-day,
As backward and forward she sings and swings,
  Out in the hammock under the tree.

As out in the hammock under the tree,
  Backward and forward she swings and sings,
She is dearer than aught in the world to me,
  And fairer than all of its fairest things.
Jewels or gold or roses or lilies,
  Fairer and dearer and sweeter she still is,
And thus and ever for her I pray,
  That life may be like this perfect day,
As out in the hammock she swings and sings,
  Out in the hammock under the tree.

THE GREAT GULF.

Close by her side for so many years,
  So close I hear her beating heart,
  And yet our souls as far apart
As though we dwelt in different spheres.

Were seas between and leagues of land,
  I could bear this with better grace;
  But thus to look upon her face,
And thus to clasp and claim her hand,

And know while my thoughts never roam,
  That this is all I have; that far
  From me as any shining star
Her thought forever seeks its home.

This is death's pang; what though there rolls
  Wide wastes between your paths, a thought
  Can bridge that sea, but there is naught
Can bridge the gulf between two souls.

AN AUTUMN DAY.

The earth lies wrapped in peace; upon her brow
  The laurels of the fruitful year are pressed;
Triumphant and elate still seems she now
  As one who glad, yet weary, dreams of rest.

The sun, his useful ardor wisely spent,
  Floods all the day with tender mellow light
That crowns with smiling, well-deserved content,
  Sere-reaped meadows and gay wooded height.

Upon the air's soft breath the gossamer
  Ghost of a blossom hither and thither flies;
All insect life with plainly lessened stir,
  Pursues its aimless industries.

Close by the fences, in still country-ways,
  The plumage of the crimson sumac shines;
From tree and shrub with every zephyr sways
  The fairy drapery of scarlet vines

As though the summer, when her reign was o'er,
  Fleeing, usurped and wounded through the
    wood,
Added unto her giving one gift more,
  And glorified them with her own heart's blood.

Far out upon the little lake the trees
  Cast lengthening shadows; swaying branches nod
Unto their fair reflection; every breeze
  Kisses the glory of the golden-rod.

And over all the loving sky leans low,
  And seeing all the beauty mirrored there,
Itself most fair, smiles wonderingly, as though
  It had not dreamed the world was half so fair.

SECOND SIGHT.

In this short life of mine sweet joy hath come
And crowned dear moments with a perfect grace,
Sorrow hath held me in its strong embrace,
Torn me with pain and left me bruised and numb,
Left me a-hungered for the cup and crumb
That no man gave. Temptation, fair of face,
Assailed me in my life's most holy place,
And left me worn with struggling, seeking some
Safe shelter for my head. And now
Since I have walked with these eternal three,
Since I have clasped them each and all by hand,
There is nought written on my brother's brow,
Nor in his eyes, mine own eyes may not see,
Nor in his heart but mine may understand.

THE BRAVER WAY.

Oft in the old days weary men forsook
The busy world because their hearts were sore;
And women, who had said forevermore
Farewell to happiness, in silence took
Their way to convent gates. But shall we go
Unto the convent or the cloistered nook
To-day for such as these? Nay, rather look
Where smiles are bright, where eloquence doth flow;
Where love is queen, and careless pleasure reigns;
Whereon sad brows fame's laurel wreath doth grow;
Where keen wit sends its arrows to and fro,
And sharp-edged traffic counts its golden gains.
Here hide they 'neath such guise as will not fail,
What weaker souls hid 'neath the cowl and veil.

VICTORY.

She had sought for days and years
For the gem that she knew somewhere
Was shining for her to wear.
Often with doubts and fears
She was tempted and torn and tossed
And sometimes her way she lost,
In the darkness that, fold on fold,
Clasped her fast in its hold.
Oft in her soul there were tears;
But smiles on her lips alway.
And ever in sunniest day,
Or darkest, heaviest night,
Shone her eyes with a steadfast light.
Unawed by the flight of time,
Unheeding the lips that warned,
Despising the lips that scorned,
She sought with a faith sublime
For this gem of her life's desire,
Snow-pure with a heart of fire.

One day upon her darkness gleamed
The gem of which she long had dreamed.
One day with happy hand she pressed
It shining to her faithful breast.
One day through all her being went
The rapture of divine content,
And then, while yet her heart was thrilled
With joy, behold, that heart was stilled,
And then her all-enraptured eyes
Were closed upon their paradise,
And men said: how unfair of fate,
How pitiful that all too late,
This grace has come to her. But she,
Wrapped in the still intensity
Of bliss, as one who understood
The mystery of ill and good,
Calm and triumphant seemed to say
To those who leaned above her clay,
Why should you weep? for I have won
All that I sought. What more hast mortal done?

A DEFENSE.

Better to be comforted
Once with living wine and bread,
Better on the breast to wear
The one flower divinely fair,
Than to fill the careless hands,
With lesser blooms from many lands;
Than to seek with curious lip,
Of a thousand cups to sip;
Than to feast with kings and lords,
At a thousand banquet boards.

True, oh wise man, yet your creed
Does not cover every need.
If I think my cup holds wine,
If I deem the true bread mine,
And I find the long-sought draught,
Bitter, tasteless, as 'tis quaffed;
If I find my cherished blossom
Hides a sting within its bosom,
If on stones my teeth I break,
Must I then my search forsake?

In your steadfast eyes I know
I seem like the winds that blow.
You have won life's gracious dower,
Royal feast and royal flower;
What can you know 'mid such store,
Of the soul at famine's door?
What amid your peace and rest,
Of my ceaseless, weary quest?
How dare you with such small ruth.
Judge my fealty to truth!

For, oh wise man, oft I say
All undoubtingly, "to-day
I will find the perfect bloom,
Find my soul's own banquet room.'
Thus I seek with faith supreme,
The one blossom of my dream;
Thus I seek on land and sea
The fair portion mete for me.
So, oh wise man in truth's name,
Do I bear your foolish blame.

IF I HAD KNOWN.

If I had known one year ago to-day
The little something that to-day I know,
I would have warded off the heavy blow
That sent you on your sorrow-laden way,
With all your hopes laid low.

With saddest of all hunger sore accurst,
We miss by just a step the healing streams;
Miss the true bread of which the faint soul dreams;
On hunger unappeased and unslacked thirst
Too late the right path gleams.

What is so hard in all the bitter years,
As to look back and see the closed gate
That one dear day we might have opened. Fate
Wrings from our eyes the saddest, saltest tears,
O'er wisdom won too late.

WITH CLEAR VISION.

Why, yes; the world is full of bitter things;
Thorns grow in every path; the fierce wind blows
Out of our gladdest skies; and sorrow stings,
And evil lives, and truth hath many foes.
But oh, such flowers bloom; such stars shine through
The clouds; so many ships come in,
Laden with all that life may hope to win;
So many hearts are warm and strong and true!

I pray you see the blossom's beauty, not
Its one poor blighted leaf; I pray you see
The diamond's sparkle rather than the blot
Upon its brightness; on the orchard tree
See the perfected apple, not the one
Worm-eaten, insect-stung; and, for one field
Barren, unfruitful, see the bounteous yield
Of many thousands ripening in the sun.

See how above life's selfish gains and greeds
The soul of man still lifts aspiring eyes;
See how amid its rank and choking weeds
Bloom the fair flowers of love and sacrifice
Above the desert places of a soul;
See you the gardens where the sun has shone;
See you what fruit its fertile fields have grown;
Speak you its beauty, not its dearth and dole.

I pray for you the clear sight to discern,
Amid the dross of life its pure, fine gold;
I pray in all your learning you may learn
To praise what sweet a bitter cup may hold;
Above the critic eye, the critic phrase,
To help and bless all souls where'er they be.
Seek you the vision all life's good to see,
Seek you the wisdom all its good to praise.

LEAD US HIGHER.

O, singer of sweet songs, the chords of sadness
You strike too often; failure, grief and wrong,
And sad distrust and love's despair and madness,
Burden your every song.

True, life is full of care, and sad-eyed sorrow,
To every lip its bitter cup will bring;
Evil defies to-day and mocks to-morrow,
And love is suffering.

But joy sings often, hushing sorrow's wailing,
And evil hides its head and justice reigns;
And love divine, unselfish and unfailing,
True to the end remains.

Above the valley's vapors shines the beauty
Of mountain heights, serenely, gladly sweet;
And there remains the blessedness of duty,
Though love dies at our feet.

Remembering this, and by true service lifted
Above each small regret that daily bars
Your path, your songs, oh, singer greatly gifted,
Shall lead us to the stars!

THE IMMORTAL SONG.

Led by a star they came
And knelt at His feet,
Bringing fine gold and myrrh
And incense sweet.
No royal sign He wore,
No robe nor ring,
Yet in their souls they knew
He was the King!

The halo round the Christ-brow never yet
Hath paled through all life's storm and stress and fret;
The star the wise men followed hath not set.

The song the shepherds heard upon the plains,
Of peace on earth, good will to man, remains
Still sweeter, dearer, than earth's sweetest strains.

Who dare say this is much or that is naught,
The greatest good with gold is never bought;
Weak hands the altar's choicest gifts have brought?

True love to truest giving finds no bar;
Who loves doth give his best, and not afar
He follows surely the true guiding star.

Ring out, O bells! O songs,
Uplifting grand and sweet,
Your music to all time belongs
As long as hearts shall beat.
Sing, soul, the perfect strain,
Again and yet again;
The immortal song of peace on earth,
Good will to men!

THE APPOINTED WAY.

Could I have chosen, dear, for you,
You would have lifted eyes to where
Shone sunny skies, serene and fair,
With not a cloud of angry hue
To vex the blue.

Could I have chosen, dear, for you,
Your tender feet would have been led
In lands where thornless roses shed
Their sweets, and clear streams wandered through,
And soft winds blew.

Pain with its sadly weary cry
You had not known, nor heavy care,
Nor doubt's unrest, nor falsehood's snare,
Grief with obediently averted eye
Had passed you by.

But friendship's ever blessed charms
Had been your own; and all that gold
Within its plenteous hand could hold,
And love had wrapt you in his arms,
Safe from all harms.

What foolish wisdom, dear, was mine.
From sweet, reposeful heights afar,
You saw the gleam of your own star;
What mattered wind, or shade or shine?
You knew the sign.

The stream must to its ocean run,
Brave feet must walk their fated path;
The acorn bides the tempest's wrath;
From peaks that weaker wings must shun
The eagle seeks the sun.

INCONSISTENCY.

If the sunset's glowing splendor
  Were a thousand miles away,
If the day dawn sweet and tender
  And the twilight cool and gray
Came but once in a lifetime, madly
  The sunset's quest I'd make,
Or live a lifetime gladly
  For the dawn's and the dusk's dear sake.

The flower I would risk my neck for,
  Grows up on the mountain high;
The one I have but to beck for,
  Beneath my feet may die;
And tho' love wraps and folds me
  As a garment folds one in,
The love that haunts and holds me
  Is the love I can not win.

I would give earth's sweetest song for
  One strain of my dear dream-lute,
'Neath the orchard boughs I long for
  The Hesperidean fruit;

Of all sweet wine—the rarest
  Is that which is not for me;
Of all my ships, the fairest
  Still sails an unknown sea.

'Tis well, for the lute I dream of
  Would play a discordant tune;
The fruit I catch the gleam of
  Would pall on me over soon;
'Twould find the vintage flattened,
  If ever that wine should pour;
The sails of that ship all tattered,
  If ever it came to shore;

And the love that I have no speech for
  That I dream of by night and day,
That with heart and soul I reach for—
  So fair and so far away—
Glorious, radiant, alluring,
  If ever that love were mine,
It would be in its fleet enduring
  Like the charm of the fruit and wine.

And so to be quite consistent—
If ever a mortal may—
I must put, with pains persistent,
Consistency clean away;
I may hope and dream forever,
But in face of my hope, alas,
I must hope and pray that never
My dream may come to pass.

THE DEARER DEAD.

You mourn for your dead; you go,
Clad in your robes of woe,
To the spot where they sleep—
And you weep
Such bitter tears, and there
You strew flowers, fresh and fair;
You place a white stone at the head,
With the dear name of your dead.

But there are dearer dead, you know
Not the bitterest woe,
Till you close the eager eyes
Of sweet young Hope, and mournful-wise,
Cross the pallid hands of Love,
And sorrowing bend above
The ashes and dust
Of Honor and Truth and Trust,
For these are the dearer dead.

Ah! those other dead; who dare
Robes of mourning for dead hopes wear?

Who bids a stone arise
To tell where dead love lies?
When did ever a mourner say
Help me bury these dead away?

These funeral trains men do not see;
They move silently
Down to the heart where the grave is made,
Where the dead is laid.
No flowers are strewn there,
No moan is heard there,
No ritual is said
Over their bed,
Hidden away from sight
The grave lies low.
But the solemn, silent night,
That doth know,
And it seeth ever the white
Face of our woe.

You are happy who mourn for your dead,
By the side of graves kept green
By the tears you shed;

Who can lean
Lovingly where they sleep
Pray for those who in secret weep—
The dearer dead.

STRANGEST OF ALL.

"It is so very strange that I am fain
To say 'tis false!" And with a little frown,
Vexing her brows, she laid the novel down.
"Such strange things can not be; such grief and pain,
Such mad delirium of bliss and bane,
Come not to any life." There came a day—
What changes do the swift years make, I crossed
Her path again; her face had something lost,
And something gained; and thus I heard her say:
"How weak and poor is the romancer's art!
There is no tongue or pen that can portray
The story of the simplest human heart.
Once I could read and wonder, now in sooth,
I know there's naught so bitter strange, as truth."

REPENTANCE.

What is it to repent? Is it alone
To feel the grief that bids us look to Heaven,
And for our sins, with ready tear and moan,
Cry out to be forgiven?

Is it on weary pilgrimage to go?
Is it to put hard penances between
Our dear indulgences, and bowing low,
To cry unclean, unclean?

Is it above the sacred page to pore,
To fast from dawn of day to set of sun?
Thus can we prove how sadly we deplore
The ills that we have done?

Nay, nay, it is not thus with pious dole,
That one may hope to batter down the wall
His guilt has raised between his sinning soul
And the great Soul of all.

Who seeks with reverent feet the higher ways,
Repents more truly of the old paths trod,
Than he who lingering in the lowland prays,
"Be merciful, O God!"

Better than lifting up of contrite eyes,
Is the warm hand outstretched in helpful love.
Better sweet mercy than sad sacrifice,
Our penitence to prove.

With wordless argument we thus confute
(Giving for worthless chaff the perfect wheat),
A weaker creed. 'Tis thus we bring forth fruit
For true repentance meet.

INVULNERABLE.

Her brow is smooth and wide and white,
No trace of feeling its beauty mars.
I see her eyes, and her eyes are bright,
With the soulless splendor of far-off stars.
Her lips are red as the poppy leaf,
With never a curve that is taught of grief.

In straightest paths she has kept her feet,
With never a longing for wider ways:
With calm correctness her heart has beat;
She has only a simple and mild amaze
For straying feet and for restless hearts,
For the world's alluring and subtle arts.

Warm hearts only do break and bleed;
The Tempter fights for the strongest soul;
The storm leaves scathless the yielding reed,
But wrecks itself on the giant bole;
An acorn cup or a leaf will float
On waves that would swallow a stanch, true boat.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

If I am weak and you are strong
Why then, why then
To you the braver deeds belong?
And so again,
If you have gifts and I have none,
If I have shade and you have sun,
'Tis yours with freer hand to give,
'Tis yours with truer grace to live,
Than I who giftless, sunless, stand
With barren life and hand.

We do not ask the little brook
To turn the wheel;
Unto the larger stream we look.
The strength of steel
We do not ask from silken band,
Nor heart of oak from willow wand;
We do not ask the wren to go
Up to the heights the eagles know;
Nor yet expect the lark's clear note,
From out the dove's dumb throat.

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'Tis wisdom's law, the perfect code,
By love inspired;
Of him on whom much is bestowed,
Is much required;
The tuneful throat is bid to sing,
The oak must reign the forest's king,
The rushing stream the wheel must move,
The tempered steel its strength must prove,
'Tis given unto the eagle's eyes,
To face the mid-day skies.

IN THE SHADOW.

You call me cold and grave, without my share
  Of pretty playful ways and winning graces,
The bloom of smiles that other women wear,
  Just as they wear their ribbons or their laces.

You wonder why, since I am still so much,
  As you are pleased to say, true, high and tender,
Gifted and fair, I lack the subtle touch
  That should have crowned me with all woman-splendor.

See here this rose! It grew there in the shade
  'Twas beaten of the winds, the soft dews missed it,
'Twas drenched of rain, a cruel worm betrayed
  Its very heart, the loving sunshine kissed it

Only enough to make it know its need,
  And gladly open to its scanty caring,
Forever reaching up with heart of greed,
  For what it had not; brave and undespairing.

It longed to be a perfect flower; it knew
  That to be perfect was a rose's duty;
And so, poor little blighted thing, it grew
  To this pathetic, pitiful half-beauty.

But would I wear this rose upon my breast?
  Ah! friend of mine, how much your speech discloses.
Nay, you and I will only choose the best,
  Out of the world of women and of roses.

DISCONTENT.

Two boats rocked on the river,
In the shadow of leaf and tree;
One was in love with the harbor,
One was in love with the sea.

The one that loved the harbor
The winds of fate outbore,
But left the other longing
Forever against the shore.

The one that rests on the river
In the shadow of leaf and tree,
With wistful eyes looks ever
To the one far out at sea.

The one that rides the billow,
Though sailing fast and fleet,
Looks back to the peaceful river.
To the harbor safe and sweet.

One frets against the quiet
Of the moss-grown, shaded shore;
One sighs that it may enter
That harbor nevermore.

One wearies of the dangers
Of the tempest's rage and wail;
One dreams amid the lilies
Of a far-off snowy sail.

Of all that life can teach us,
There's naught so true as this:
The winds of fate blow ever,
But ever blow amiss.

THE HEAVIEST CROSS.

It must be pitiful to bear great blame,
All undeserved, sure that with open scorn,
Or unclean jests of their own vileness born,
Or covert sneers, vile lips repeat your name.

To know that honest men whom you have loved
Do speak you ill; or else, from very truth,
(Rather than speak what they believe the truth)
Keep silence, by a tender sorrow moved.

To know that though your heart be clean and pure,
And though with earnest aim you walk your ways,
Still will this shadow fold you all your days;
Still will this bitterness of doubt endure.

More to be pitied still I think is he,
Who, walking in the sunlight of fair fame,
Hides in his soul a secret sin and shame;
Though all untouched by breath of calumny.

Who from the world has won the wretched gain
Of homage for the virtues he has not;
Who takes men's praise as one without a spot,
Still seeing all the while that hidden stain.

Love's crown to win and honor's robe to wear,
And yet to know his robe should not be white;
That to sweet love and fame he has no right!
What heavier cross can any mortal bear?

TWO SONGS.

It was a perfect poem. There was not
A line that critic eye might not behold;
'Twas pure as snow and as the snow 'twas cold.
In all its excellence there was no blot.
And men read and admired it, saying, What
Rare skill this poet hath, to so enfold
Such pearls of thought in setting of such gold.
Then straightway all its beauty they forgot.

There was another and a simpler song,
Of the free singer's soul a very part,
'Twas warm as flame and as the flame 'twas pure;
And many a one amid the careless throng
Caught up the music to his listening heart,
Where evermore its sweetness doth endure.

MY CUP HAS HAD ITS WINE.

They mourn for me because my life seems cold
And barren, destitute of warmth and bloom,
They do not know that one glad hour can hold
Enough of joy to brighten years of gloom.

They mourn for me because I seem to miss
The little pleasures for which others live;
I better love the ghost of my dead bliss
Than any living joy that earth can give.

For I have had my portion—full, complete;
A cup with love's own vintage running o'er;
Shattered full soon, but O, so sweet, so sweet—
A perfect draught, what mortal can have more?

I would not even bid the bounty back,
And if I died to-night it would be mine.
To feel no bitter waste, no empty lack
In life; my cup has had its wine.

AFTER THE STORM.

All night the storm raged wildly; in the morning
I walked my garden-path; the radiant sun
Shone bravely out in undisguised scorning
Of what the night had done.

Yet there the tender grapes lay beaten, broken,
Lily and rose were prone upon the ground;
In sweet, small nests full many a tiny token,
Of summer song was drowned.

The promises of plenty and of beauty
Never to be fulfilled were 'round me strewn;
Where were the gods that they so failed in duty?
Could they not shield their own?

Was Bacchus sleeping off a drunken revel?
Had Flora and Pomona gone astray?
In careless mood unto the powers of evil,
Did they their trust betray?

So questioned I, with skillful kindness binding
My cherished vines, upbraiding the storm's wrath,
Hurt with my prostrate flowers, saddened at finding
A dead bird in my path.

But if in any realm the gods were listening,
No fainter whisper came to me from them;
And no response save the bright signals glistening,
On leaf and bud and stem.

Only the fragrance of some beaten blossom,
Only the rare breath of the wounded vine;
Of any grief in mother Nature's bosom
I saw no single sign.

Above this wreck the loss and sore disaster,
Whereat my soul was sick and half afraid,
With a great faith that never man may master,
She smiled all undismayed.

WHERE GOD WRITES SUCCESS.

No great deed that the world sees hath He done;
No riches hath He gained, nor wreath of fame;
And so the unthinking world against his name
Writes failure—bitterest word beneath the sun.

Putting aside ambitions grand and strong,
He walks with brave content a lowly way;
Seeing within his reach the wreath of bay,
He stills the music of uplifted song

That pleads for voice—the poet's gift divine;
Hungered and athirst his soul hath said:
Mine be the tasteless draught, the bitter bread,
That dearer lips may taste true bread and wine.

Choosing the greater wisdom from the less,
He walks the hard, right path with earnest aim;
Knowing, the while he hears men's foolish blame,
That man writes failure where God writes success.

FROM A FAR COUNTRY.

To-day a little message came to me,
From one who lives not three days' space away;
And yet I know full well that far Cathay—
The farthest island of the farthest sea—
Is not so far away as the far land
From where my message came. With her own hand

She wrote, who dwells therein, strong, helpful words—
Sweet, tender words, pulsing with love and truth;
With all the glad enthusiasm of youth,
She spoke of simple things—the songs of birds,
And rippling waters—with heart high and true,
She spoke brave truths—old truths forever new.

It came to me the while I sat where wine
And jewels flashed together; where red lips
Spoke 'wildering words, and velvet finger-tips
Clung lingeringly and cruelly to mine;
Where soul and sense in rapturous slavery,
Hated their charms, yet wished not to be free.

My lady questioned, lifting glorious eyes,
"Whence comes your letter?" and I answered low,
"From a far country—one that long ago
I also dwelt in." With a slow surprise
She asked, "Will you return?" "Nay 'tis in vain,
Who leaves that land goes never back again."

"And will the writer of this journey thence?"
"Nay, God forbid! You have no cause for fear;
I hold her over all so fair and dear,
She shall not leave her Land of Innocence."
The red lips quivered, and I heard them say,
Oh, sweet, fair land! Oh, land so far away!

* * * * * *

We heard the ocean beat, and moan, and roar,
We heard the billows, broken, sobbing, creep
Back to the bosom of the unknown deep,
Only to seek again the unheeding shore.
We spoke not, thinking of the eternal bar,
Between us and that country fair and far.

THE ENDLESS QUESTIONING.

He was beside me a week ago,
  Full of the hope that strong souls know;
Looking into the world's hard face,
Seeking his share of its chary grace.
  Striving, hoping, and glad for all
  The joys that unto his brothers fall.
Full of a pitying sadness, as
He saw the sorrow that life surrounds,
  He was tender and true, he *was*—he *was*,
  Dear God! how strange that sounds.

Only a week, a little week,
Since he clasped my hand and kissed my cheek;
  Since he loved me well and called me fair,
  From the shining wealth of golden hair,
From the lily throat and the dewy lips
To the sea-shell tint of my finger-tips.
  His heart was mine own. Alas! because
He has passed away from my clasp and kiss,
  Must I always say of his love it *was*,
    And never again, it is?

When he sped away in his ghostly bark,
  Did he speed to the light, or speed to the dark?
On the mystic sea did a single sail
Speak him fair with a friend's All Hail?
And who on the far world's hither rim,
Was the first to reach a hand to him?
  And there, wherever there may be—
    Strangely the mystery thrills and awes—
  Has he forgotten who so loved me?
    Does he too, say, it was?

In the flesh he questioned the why and how.
Is all made clear to his asking now?
  Does that, which here 'mid stress and strife
  He loved right well, and called sweet life,
Now to his clearer vision seem
Like a robe outworn, like an empty dream?
  Does he grieve for the years of vanished breath,
    Does he deem them idly and vainly spent?
  Does he call that life which we call death,
    And wonder at our content?

Thus do I ask unceasingly,
But never a word comes back to me.
In silence solemn and vast and deep,
Does death his terrible secret keep.
But not forever, for some fair day
I will wrest that secret from Death away.
To life more perfect and true and high,
I, too, will pass as he has passed;
Or, out of it all—like a star from the sky—
I will know it all at last.

MY MASK.

They came from north and south, from east and west;
  The living present and the dead past gave
  Their wise and simple, beautiful and brave,
From that strange land no mortal foot hath pressed.

To the poet's realm they came. My reverent clasp
  Held Portia's hand. I felt my pulses stir
  Beneath the ever faithful eyes of her
Who healed love's wound with poison of the asp.

The beggar-maid and King Cophetua
  Were there, and Enid in her faded gown,
  And she from lordly Camelot looking down,
In her white hand her web of colors gay.

Prince Hamlet waltzed with dear Evangeline;
  The Ice King galloped with the Queen of May;
  The Night leaned down to whisper to the Day;
And, sheltered by a portière's grateful screen,

I saw sweet Juliet and Romeo
  Making their vows; I saw the cowled monk cast
  Shy glances at the gray nun as she passed;
Rebecca smiled at gallant Ivanhoe.

Rare odors filled the air, and all around,
  The music as by all life's passion urged—
  Now glad, now sad, thrilled, floated, sobbed and surged,
A carnival of fragrance, sight and sound.

How did *I* mask? With laughter quick and light,
  With happy speech and careless, gracious mien,
  With calm, dear glances out of eyes serene,
Brave, shining eyes wherein none read aright.

And of the many masks upon the floor—
  They came from every land beneath the sun—
  I tell you truly, friend, there was not one
So simply baffling as the mask I wore.

THEY ALSO SERVE.

Often and often doth He hear, amid
  The many importunities wherewith we press
Our wants on Him, this prayer: "O God, forbid
  That we should live beyond our usefulness!"

Meaning the time when no more in the throng
  Of the world's workers we may take our place;
When hand and brain and heart no more are strong,
  And when our feet are weary of the race;

When we must see the sowing of the seed,
  Must look on others as they toil and spin,
Must see the earnest strife, the noble deed,
  For the world's good, but take no part therein.

Then one day, through a lesson sadly sweet,
  Our eyes are opened, and 'tis ours to see
How true a guide may be the weariest feet,
  How true a help the helpless hands may be.

Watching some dear face radiant with the light
From the great light within, at last we catch
Glimpses of starshine through the heavy night,
And read life's deeper meanings while we watch.

The larger love, the growing faith that stirs
Our hearts, the tenderest touch, all show
What lasting helpfulness may still be hers
Whose smallest want is ministered unto.

So, till all longings of the soul are met
By the hand's service, till we deem life less
Than meat or drink, we may not dare to set
A bound or limit to life's usefulness.

THE PRICE.

You would be a great artist? Can you make
  A lyre of your own aching heart-strings, and,
  Striking it with a careful, critic hand,
Out of the chords a deathless music wake?

Or can you take the keen-edged blade of Pain,
  And, from your quivering soul, with its dire aid—
  Studying meanwhile each stroke as it is made—
Chisel a statue for Art's sacred fame?

Or can you in your heart's blood bravely dip
  Your brush, and paint a picture that will bring—
  The while it sets the dull world wondering—
The approving smile to Art's impartial lip?

Can you pour sweet from bitter? Can you, whirled
  By tempest, guide a storm-tossed bark to calm?
  Can you go starving for love's blessed alm,
Yet of your very famine feed a world?

You can not? 'Tis too great a price to pay?
  You are too weak! Ay, 'tis a fearful price.
  If you one moment count it sacrifice
You are not called to greatness; go your way

And live like other women, and rejoice
  In your own path; it may be better so.
  I do not say, but this full well I know,
God gives unto His chosen ones no choice.

THE BOUNDARY.

Who can sing us a song of sorrow
That fitly shall echc a soul's despair?
Who from the kingdom of words may borrow
A crown that is fitting for love to wear?

Who can render the marvelous story,
As the dawn breaks over the world's far rim?
Who hath voice for the sunset's glory,
Or the twilight, solemn and dusk and dim?

Though the chrism strange to his life is given,
Though never a discord his music mars,
Who, in the face of the midnight heaven,
Can sing a song to the eternal stars?

Though speech should bloom like a garden blossom,
Royal and tender and subtly sweet,
'Tis shamed by the rose on the maiden's bosom,
Aye, by the clover beneath her feet.

Though the poet soar to the heights supernal,
Though his strain be never so grand and strong,
Still with silence, supreme, eternal,
Abides the essence of perfect song.

THE FAITHFUL YEARS.

The world knows not its prophets, teachers, seers;
It says we are the people, we are wise.
And what it understands not it denies,
Bestowing petty doubts and pitying sneers,
Withholding help and strength, but lo! the years—
For time is kind and every creature tries
To see what sort it be—unseals its eyes,
And its own blindness to itself appears.

Can you not wait, O worker? Read the list
Of all the world's redeemers, to whose names
The same world's homage cometh over late.
What though the present meed of praise be missed,
No true work ever dies by floods or flames,
The years hold all in trust. Can ye not wait?

IN MERRIER MOOD.

THE BALLAD OF THE STORY-TELLER.

Now bring me a maid that is plump and dark.
And bring me a maid that is tall and fair.
One must be gay as a meadow lark,
One with a grave and queenly air,
And a sort of high-toned stately stare.
A man, old, rich, and a perfect fright,
A man that is young and debonnair,
And lo! the story that I will write.

Bring me a summery moonlit park,
Bring me a house in a handsome square;
One in the country, a kind of ark
Of refuge for lovers; some mad despair,
Duty, temptation and grief and care,
To take the edge off love's delight,
A few odd people from here and there,
And lo! the story that I will write.

Bring me a trip in a treacherous bark,
A wreck in the mid-seas anywhere;
Bring me a duel, heaven save the mark,
A reunited and happy pair,
A gown from Worth's for the bride to wear;
And bring me a fate as dark as night
For all the bold, bad ones to share;
And lo! the story that I will write.

ENVOY.

Bring ink and pen to my easy chair,
Of paper a ream all fair and white,
A publisher ready to do and dare,
And lo! the story that I will write.

HIGH ART.

They sat within a little alcove, where
Some thoughtful hand had placed, ostensibly
To catch the eye of some art devotee,
A large portfolio of engravings rare.

Around them music throbbed and beauty smiled;
But still with wise and critical intent,
Above this treasure-trove they gravely bent,
By every lesser treasure unbeguiled.

No doubt the pictures were beyond compare;
But once, between the portière's kindly fold—
Velvet, dull red, with arabesques of gold—
I caught a gracious glimpse of one more fair.

I saw swift, happy hands a moment meet,
Love's tender question shining in his eyes;
And in her own I saw Love's glad replies—
It was the world-old story, ever sweet.

I say, and never mortal can dissuade
Me from so saying, that they did not see,
From lid to lid, though looking critically,
So fair a picture as the one they made.

O thoughtful matron, when you placed that book
With all its riches of engraven page,
Cherub, Madonna, sinner, saint and sage,
Within that very cosy curtained nook,

Tell me, I pray, was it discreetly planned,
Was it keen policy or pure sentiment,
Or was it only happy accident
That made you play so into Cupid's hand?

A MODERN MINERVA.

'Twas the height of the gay season, and I can not tell the reason,
But, at a dinner party given by Mrs. Mayor Thwing,
It became my pleasant duty to take out a famous beauty—
The prettiest woman present—I was happy as a king.

Her dress beyond a question, was an artist's best creation;
A miracle of loveliness was she from crown to toe.
Her smile was sweet as could be, her voice just as it should be—
Not high, and sharp, and wiry, but musical and low.

Her hair was soft and flossy, golden, plentiful and glossy;
Her eyes so blue and sunny, shone with every inward grace.

I could see that every fellow in the room was really yellow
With jealousy, and wished himself that moment in my place.

As the turtle soup we tasted, like a gallant man I hasted
To pay some pretty tribute to this muslin, silk and gauze;
But she turned and softly asked me—and I own the question tasked me—
What were my fixed opinions on the present suffrage laws.

I admired a lovely blossom, resting on her gentle bosom;
The remark I thought a safe one—I could hardly make a worse;
With a smile, like any Venus, she gave me its name and genus,
And opened very calmly a botanical discourse.

But I speedily recovered. As her taper fingers hovered
Like a tender benediction o'er a little bit of fish,
Further to impair digestion, she brought up the Eastern Question.
By that time I fully echoed that other fellow's wish.

And as sure as I'm a sinner, right through that endless dinner
Did she talk of moral science, of politics and law,
Of natural selection, of Free Trade and Protection,
Till I came to look upon her with a sort of solemn awe.

Just to hear that lovely woman, looking more divine than human,
Talk with such discrimination of Ingersoll and Cook,
With such a childish winning smile, quoting Huxley, and Carlyle,
It was quite a revelation—it was better than a book.

Chemistry and mathematics, agriculture and chromatics,
Music, painting, sculpture—she knew all the tricks of speech—
Bas-relief and chiaroscuro, and at last the Indian Bureau
She discussed it quite serenely as she trifled with a peach.

I have seen some dreadful creatures, with vinegary features,
With their fearful store of learning setting me in sad eclipse;
But I am ready, quite to swear, if I have ever heard the Tariff
Or the Eastern Question settled by such a pair of lips.

Never saw I dainty maiden so remarkably o'erladen
From lip to tip of finger, with the lore of books and men;
Quite in confidence I say it, and I trust you'll not betray it,
But I pray to gracious heaven, that I never may again.

*HAIL AND FAREWELL.

In camphorated presses put away the thick wool dresses,
Put away the fur and flannel and all their useful ilks.
Bring not the hose of wool now, the boot with thick broad sole now,
But bring me the dainty slipper, and the delicate hose of silk.

Farewell the flying cutter that made my pulses flutter,
The carnival's mad pleasure, the mask and domino,
For the climbing and colliding of the gay toboggan sliding,
Bring me the hammock swinging where the breezes come and go.

Hail to the rose and lily, to the twilihgt calm and stilly,
To the opal skies of morning, to the sunset's rose and gold;

* From *Harper's Bazaar*, by permission of the publishers.

To all the splendid glory with which summer tells
the story,
She hath told since time's beginning yet which
never groweth old.

Now from their hiding places take my summer lawns
and laces
And bring to me the sketch-book, the Alpenstock
and oar,
And though the hot sun menace set out the dear
lawn-tennis,
Aye all the dear attractions of the seasons gone
before.

Hail now to woodland spaces, to leafy trysting-
places,
To moonlit rides and rambles on river and on
shore;
To sweet romantic dreams and to ices and to creams,
and
The radiant summer lover that liveth evermore.

She comes, the radiant summer, but with the gracious comer,
With dew and bloom and sunshine there is still a little blot;
For, as if to so deride her, come the ant and bug and spider,
The sunburn and the freckle and the bang that curleth not.

So bring the broad-brimmed hat, the umbrella and all that, the
Thick veil to shield my fairness—for now the strife begins;
'Gainst the bold complexion clouders bring the balms and creams and powders,
The faithful freckle lotion and the trusty crimping-pins.

Farewell to winter's pleasure, that knew no stint or measure,
To its sparkle and its glitter, to its ermine robe of snow.

To its wisdom and its folly, to its mistletoe and holly,
To the sturdy good base-burner, to the sofa wheeled up so.

Farewell, O dear departed; Hail, summer, happy hearted,
Farewell again, O season, whose merry day is done;
For its pleasures fair and fleet now, bring others just as sweet now,
In place of winter's idyl bring me a summer one.

BEHIND HER MASK.

'Twas at a grand bal masque; the swaying tide
Swept me with blest resistlessness beside
A bonny Highland lass;
And something, but just what the magic spell
She wrought upon me I can never tell,
But yet it came to pass.

I lingered, fascinated; 'round us flashed
The dazzling lights; the splendid music crashed,
Floated and throbbed and thrilled;
And strangely through my being once again
There surged the old-time joy, the old-time pain,
I thought the years had stilled.

Something—perhaps the eyes—that like great stars
Shone through the light mask's tantalizing bars—
Perhaps the flash and gleam
Of the white hand—wakened the old-time strife,
And, vivid as the day, brought back to life
That dead and buried dream.

Who knows? Who cares? But was it strange, I ask,
That I should whisper from behind my mask
The words that lovers know?
That I should beg of her, for love's dear sake,
To show the face that had the power to shake
My soul with tumult so?

And when she did (how harder to believe
Is truth than any fiction pen can weave)
I saw the radiant charms
Of her whom, years ago, fortune or chance—
Whate'er you will—or fate, or circumstance,
Had taken from my arms.

She looked up in my face with pained surprise,
And said, less with her lips than with her eyes,
"'Tis just the old, old way;
Such things are easy for a man to speak,
And deathless vows hold, sometimes for a week,
And sometimes for a day."

"Nay! nay!" I said; "if I beneath this guise
Have found you, dear, 'tis that I recognized
Love's deathless hold upon me.

If I have bowed before your masked face,
It only shows how, for all time and space,
  Your sweetness, dear, hath won me.

"Doth this not prove," I said, "by every sign,
My intuitions certain and divine,
  Through all the sad years flown?
Doth it not prove to you, beyond a doubt,
That anywhere my soul would find you out
  And claim you for its own?"

"Perhaps it does," she said, with lips demure;
"Perhaps it does; I am not wholly sure.
  Perhaps 'tis wrong to doubt it;
But here my husband comes; 'twill be no task
For him to tell; so, if you please, let's ask
  Him what he thinks about it."

THE BALLADE OF LIGHT HOUSEKEEPING.

'Tis a subtly sweet suggestive phrase,
But the simple soul who is lured thereby
Will make a sorrow for many days.
In secret oft will he moan and cry,
And vote the thing a tremendous lie,
For it means—this phrase that sounds so fair—
A world of trouble and toil and care;
And a wild, distracting wish to go
Away from it soon and anywhere;
I speak of the things whereof I know.

It means all little transparent ways,
To hide away from the common eye
The fact that your bread and butter stays
In your desk; that you bake and boil and fry
In a single dish. It means to try
To hang your garments, the best you wear,
In a folding bed, that last despair
Of honest souls; and, bitterest blow,
It means a kitcheny-parlor air—
I speak of the things whereof I know.

It means to shrink 'neath the stern amaze
  Of the lordly butchers' and bakers' eye;
Apologizing in meek dispraise
  For your modest wants. To rave or sigh
  Over the pangs of the boughten pie.
'Tis to pray a strong, heav'n-reaching prayer
For the meal a man pronounces "square."
  And to be once more in life below
Free from that peace-destroying snare;
  I speak of the things whereof I know.

ENVOY.

Ye who are tempted this life to share,
  Consider the truth I fain would show,
For with hand on heart I firmly swear,
  I speak of the things whereof I know.

THE POET'S MAIL.

Four letters and a paper, this one showing
A careless hand is from my cousin May;
Ten pages long and filled to overflowing
With beaux and belles and balls and all things gay.

And this one: well, I can not quite discover
Just what the indefinite writer does intend;
He's quite too frankly cordial for a lover,
And much too lover-like for just a friend.

Here a dear sister poet tells her fancies,
Merry or sad, just as her humor is;
Weaving a web of many-hued romances
Out of the soberest realities.

And here is one in marvelous superscription,
I make it out by guessing at a part—
I tell the truth without a spice of fiction—
I tear it open with a fluttering heart.

Two cabalistic words here greet my vision;
Two single words expressive and refined.
Yet do they crush me with their curt precision,
Their most polite "Respectfully declined."

I take up tenderly my little versling,
That I had written with such loving care;
I feel as does a mother when her nursling
Is called by others neither sweet nor fair.

I rail against the man who so decrees it,
And like the world-renowned worm I turn;
He does not know a poem when he sees it,
Elsewise my genius would he quick discern.

Or else he wants to crush out my ambition,
To keep from me my share of fame or pelf;
Or else, O most judicious, sage decision,
It may be he writes poetry himself.

If this be true, then may the muses flout him,
And play upon him all unworthy pranks;
May every editor in the country scout him,
And all his poems be "declined with thanks."

Now, once again, I read the little verses
I thought so perfect; it must be confessed
This line is bad, and that one surely worse is,
And this thought certainly is ill-expressed.

It may be that my vanity deceived me,
It may be neither jealousy nor spite
Inspired the critic who so sorely grieved me—
It may be, after all, the man was right.

*METAMORPHOSIS.

Oh! the summer girl, through the summer's whirl,
With the grace of the season laden;
There was never a spot where we found her not,
This multitudinous maiden.
And here and there, and everywhere—
I am glad so to record her,
From fair beginning to latest inning,
She had charms of a varied order.

She could dance, ride, swim, at the moment's whim,
She could row like a man from college,
She could calculate just the worth and weight
Of her well-assorted knowledge;
And 'tis ten to one, that before some gun
(O metaphor complicated),
With a smile or a frown, the foe went down,
Or discreetly capitulated.

* From *Harper's Weekly*, by permission of the publishers.

But put them away—they have their day—
Her ruffles, and frills, and laces;
With a tender sigh she had said good-bye
To their all-bewildering graces.
She is seen no more on the sea-girt shore,
In the gown that did so adorn her,
Or on rustic seat, in the safe retreat
Of the porch's shaded corner.

With her vim and dash, and black eyes' flash,
That would madden the soul ascetic,
Or with dreamy eyes, and the charm that lies,
In the attitude esthetic.
In the shady nook, with the sketching book,
No more she sweetly poses;
Grave and gay she has passed away,
With the butterflies and the roses.

But behold and lo! pray tell me who
Is this creature of radiant graces,
Who in wool and fur, sets the pulse astir
As did she of the lawns and laces;

Who loves right well the gay sleigh-bell,
  Tinkling its tune of gladness,
The jar and jog of the swift tobog.
  And the carnival's merry madness.

Who at sure command of her practiced hand
  Hath arrows within her quiver,
As many and keen as were ever seen
  By her of the wood and river;
Who can smile and sigh her soft reply,
  As she lists to the world-old story,
As well by the bright base-burner's light
  As the moonlight's vanished glory.

Now, who is she? Why, it's plain to me
  As the light of the stars or sun,
That this frost-set pearl is the summer girl
  Turned into a winter one;
And I dare aver, as I look at her,
  To her role so well adjusted,
That the summer places her half-won cases
  In hands that may well be trusted.

THE BALLADE OF THE UNLEARNED MAN.

I know a maiden very fair to see,
  She's lived of years one little charming score;
Often, when from my daily labors free,
  I seek admittance at her father's door.
I like her well, and I would like her more,
But—and I fear me there be many such—
  Of learning she hath such a mighty store,
Alas! Alas! This maiden knows so much!

She reads the Greek, and very learnedly
  She talks, this maiden that I might adore,
Of music, art and science; poetry
  She writes. Alas! This most do I deplore.
  Learning exudes, I say, from every pore,
While ignorance doth hold me in its clutch.
  I say again, just as I said before,
Alas! Alas! This maiden knows so much!

She also works in clay, and valiantly
  She hammereth brass; to all the heavy lore

She adds the lighter, so it seems to me.
  She paints, ye gods! To-day her canvas bore
  A scene like none on any sea or shore.
The ivory keys know well her skillful touch;
  Like any college man she pulls an oar,
Alas! Alas! This maiden knows so much!

ENVOY.

But she for whom my very being's core
  Is sad, is not this very learned she.
  To all her excellence I do agree,
But still I do not want a wife to soar,
  While I go hobbling on upon a crutch.
I want a real nice girl—no less, no more.
  I want a girl who does not know so much!

THE BALLADE OF THE BABY.

I'm only a baby, weak and small,
  Bald of head and red in the face—
  A bundle of flannel and bib and lace.
But don't, I pray, into error fall,
For there's not a thing on this great, round ball,
  Or big or little, or old or new,
That holds the world in completer thrall;
  Come, list to the deeds that I can do!

I can shriek a shriek to rend all space,
  Can choke myself with my 'broidered shawl;
Can send my nurse on a frantic chase
  For pins that never were there at all;
  I can make my pa, so strong and tall,
Say curious words—just one or two—
  As he walks the floor, too hush my squall;
Come, list to the deeds that I can do!

I can coo and coo with tender grace,
  Can bring my subjects at beck or call;

With cunning smile and a soft embrace,
While into mischief I straightway crawl,
My mamma's anger I can forestall;
I can pat-a-cake and can peek-a-boo,
I can charm, enslave, delude, appall;
Come, list to the deeds that I can do!

ENVOY.

With my tiny hands I can build love's wall
As high and strong as the heavens are blue.
Oh! I am the monarch of hut and hall—
Come, list to the deeds that I can do!

IN THE GARDEN.

Up to my window the roses
  Send their sweet perfume;
Around the porch uncloses,
  The jessamine's fairy bloom,
Filling with subtle fragrance
  Mv little white-robed room.

The bird out yonder sings me
  A little song of glee,
And every zephyr brings me
  The murmur of the bee;
Soft summer sounds are filling
  The world with melody.

The sunny garden shows me
  Many a rose-wreathed way;
The crystal fountain throws me
  A tempting kiss of spray—
Perfect the lovely picture—
  Perfect the summer day.

With the odorous completeness
That comes from near and far,
A pungent alien sweetness
Mingles, but does not mar;
'Tis the very pleasant odor
Of an excellent cigar.

I hear in rhythmic catches,
The bird-song sweet and clear,
And in intermittent snatches,
Another song I hear;
A plaintive, tender tenor,
Falls on my listening ear.

There's something in the garden,
Neither flower nor bird nor bee;
Of the treasures of this Eden,
'Tis the dearest one to me—
And 'tis singing, and 'tis swinging,
In a hammock 'neath a tree.

MY DECISION.

I have two lovers; both do love me truly,
I would not wish a man to love me more
Than either does, and both have wit and honor,
And one has gold galore.

If I wed John, the one with little money,
But rich in every gracious gift beside,
That there are many things life will not give me,
It can not be denied.

I'll have no diamonds, wear no rich old laces,
My china will no doubt be common delf;
No carriage, not unless, unless it might be
One that I'll draw myself.

Once in a while a visit to the city
Some noted personage to see or hear,
And now and then a concert or tea-party,
And two best gowns a year.

But Harry, he can give me diamonds, laces,
And journeys everywhere, by sea and land,
A home, a house at least, all grand and stately,
A carriage at command.

And I could shine at opera and party,
And I like all these bright, gay things, you know,
And I suppose in every life there's always
Something one must forego.

And I like diamonds, velvets, silks and laces,
This question there's no single doubt upon,
And I like pretty gowns, and I like Harry,
But I *love* John.

There he comes up the garden pathway, singing,
And now the dear truth may as well be told,
I would not give one of his tender kisses,
For all the other's gold.

Full well we know that gold is good, and yet we,
That there is dearer, truer wealth can prove;
And what our lives may lack of earthly treasure
Shall be made up in love.

So I'll take John, two gowns a year, the cottage;
Love in a very little house can live—
Love strong and true—so I will be contented
With just what John can give.

LOVE SONGS AND SONNETS.

THE SOURCE OF SONG.

Too much we poets sing of love you say;
  You bid us pitch our songs in higher key;
We look, we listen with our souls and pray
  To know if such there be.

Not sing of love? Then I must close my eyes
  And ears to every sweetest sight and sound;
For love hath many witnesses, that rise,
  E'en from the very ground.

Upon the apple's cheek the blushes glow,
  Brought thither by the kiss of wind and sun;
The sea calls to the little streams, and lo!
  They answer every one.

'Mid sweet, small tumults in the boughs above,
  The happy, nested birds the whole day long
Tell me in sweetest fashion that 'tis love,
  That fills the world with song.

In heaven above, and in the earth below,
'Tis King from morn till night, from night till morn;
Atom loved atom ages gone, and so,
The worlds were born.

Not sing of that which lifts the sinking heart,
Makes pain less bitter, gladness still more glad?
That in life's sometimes sad, defeated part,
Keeps men from going mad?

You speak in vain; no power 'gainst this can move,
As long as earth by mortal feet is trod;
And this is truest truth, who sings of love,
Will sing of God.

And never song, however great and true,
So well the poet's heritage can prove,
As the heart's simple song, so old, so new,
The song of love.

THE FACE SHE TURNS TO HIM.

To careless eyes she is not fair;
  This verdict careless lips declare,
And question why against the charm
  Of beauty, vivid, rich and warm,
The face they deem so cold and dull,
  To him should be so beautiful.

Are they too dull to judge aright?
  Hath he a quicker, keener sight?
Or is it that indifference,
  Than love hath clearer, truer sense?
Now, is he right or wrong? Now, say,
  Doth he behold her face or they?

Her eyes into his own eyes shine
  With strange illumining; a sign
Is on her brow; a palimpsest,
  Unto his gaze alone confessed.
On him in gravely, gracious mood,
  She smiles her soul's beatitude.

This is the face she turns to him,
  Oh ! say not 'tis a lover's whim
That finds it fair, nor are they dull,
  Who say she is not beautiful.
For, strangest of all mysteries,
  They never see the face he sees;
The face no artist's skill can limn,
  The love-fair face she turns to him.

WHAT DO I WISH FOR YOU?

What do I wish for you? such quick, keen pain,
As though all griefs that human hearts have known,
Were joined in one to wound and tear your own.
Such a joy as though all Heaven had come again
Into your earth. And tears that fall like rain,
And all the roses that have ever blown,
The sharpest thorn, the sceptre and the throne,
The truest liberty, the captive's chain.

Cruel, you say! Alas! I've only prayed
Such fate for you as everywhere, above
All other, women wish; that, unafraid,
They clasp in eager arms. So little dove,
I give you to the hawk. Nay, nay, pbraid
Me not, have you not longed for love?

THE SWEETEST SONG.

I said, I will write a poem here under the spreading trees;
The shifting shadows shall help me, the birds and the humming bees,
The flowers that bloom around me, and the fragrance laden breeze.

I said, I will give it the glow of the butterfly's brilliant wings,
I will fill it full of the sweetness that the prodigal south wind brings;
It shall throb and thrill with the song that the mated bluebird sings.

The grass shall wave in my poem, the hill-side stream shall flow
Over its pebbly channel, musically, soft and low;
It shall have the clover's freshness, and roses and lilies arow.

And men shall say as they read it, this poet hath understood
The secret of hill and valley, the story of sky and wood;
She sits at the feet of Nature interpreting well each mood.

But one came up through the meadow, through the beautiful clover lot,
The bees and birds and blossoms, ah me! but I saw them not;
And the poem I would have written was suddenly quite forgot.

He said—but the words he uttered were meant for no other ear—
He said—so low he whispered that I leaned my heart to hear—
And I saw my longed-for heaven in his eyes so true and clear.

Out of that heaven descended a holy and bountiful dower,

And I lived my beautiful poem there in that wonderful hour,
And life in a perfect moment opened in perfect flower.

Our hearts sung a royal measure, and the bird to its mate above,
The bee to the nodding clover the winds to the roses, strove
To echo the song we lifted, the song of a happy love.

Love that has thrilled all being since ever the world began,
That is root and life and center of the all-wise Maker's plan,
That is new as the morning sunshine, as old as the soul of man.

Who voices the songs of Nature doth ever a goodly part,
And yet though his voice be perfect, though perfect his thought and art,
Sweeter and dearer forever is the song of the human heart.

IN SLEEP.

Hands softly clasped in sweet unsevered sleep;
We two are wanderers in an unknown land.
A wondrous country, 'gainst whose mystic strand
Washes the sea of silence vast and deep.
Mayhap in that far land to-night she'll keep
Tryst with some kindred soul, or clasp some hand
I know not, or in scenes or sad or grand,
With unshared joy or pain rejoice or weep;
For clasped hands the free soul doth not stay;
Upon us both the same winds do not blow;
Our eyes do not the self-same visions see.
She is so dear I would not have her stray
Even in dreamland where I may not go.
In that strange other sleep how will it be?

SORCERY.

For many years with every grace and gift
He knew, to win her priceless love he sought;
All treasures of his heart and brain he brought,
With hands by one great hope made true and swift,
And cast all at her feet with love's unthrift.
Still in her heart the marvel was not wrought.
Still was she of life's sweetest lore untaught.
Another came, and lo! a look, a lift
Of answering eyes, a something, nothing, one
May give a name, and she hath learned unbid
What he had failed to teach with prayers and tears.
Who knows the magic of that look, that tone;
And who can tell the secret that is hid
In the one moment that outweighs long years?

OUR NEW WORLD.

What do we care for the outside gloom,
No rain can fall on us two to-night;
Sitting here in this cozy room,
With your dear presence made so bright,
The whole wide world seems all in bloom;
Lean back and smile on me—that is right.

Let me sit so near I may touch your hand
Now and then. Loose your bonny hair
From under its silken azure band;
Let it fall over the crimson chair,
The bonniest hair in all the land;
Summer sunbeams are prisoned there.

Here is a book that I have not read;
Here is a wonderful picture, too,
From a famous hand; here the carven head
Of a saint almost as fair as you.
Mayhap her eyes some mortal led,
As yours, to heights serene and true.

Treasures gathered 'neath alien skies,
Won from many a foreign shore;
I've seen them all with careless eyes —
Seen them a hundred times and more —
To night I find with glad surprise
They never were half enjoyed before.

Put your hand in mine; so, turn your cheek;
Now read to me, darling, of what befell
Those other lovers, and I will seek
In your eyes a sweeter tale; 'tis well
That the story the lips refuse to speak,
The eyes can hardly choose but tell.

I've wanted you, darling; O, so long;
I've dreamed of the face so fair and dear;
That some day out of the world-wide throng,
Would come with an equal longing here
To my faithful breast; my truest song
I sang in the hope that your heart would hear.

And everything, my darling, shares
Our joy with us. The sunflower chain
Around the breast of Clytie wears

A sudden, golden, glorious stain,
As though to bless the love that dares,
The fiery god had turned again.

She turns her face to him alway—
A marble woman so may do—
But flesh and blood not always may
(The world says) own itself so true;
But, God be thanked, you dare obey
At last the love that calls to you.

Such joy from sorrow doth redeem
Our weary past; and gloriously
Doth light with glad, prophetic gleam,
The path of days that yet shall be.
Thank God, beloved, our life-long dream
Has grown a dear reality.

STILL WATERS.

I do not love as others do, you say,
Because I do not woo you in their ways,
With many sweet signs and much open praise;
Nay, but I hold you far more dear than they.
Light words the light emotions quick obey,
But for that greater, deeper love that sways
The fervent soul, fit speech in vain essays;
No word its utmost meaning can convey.
So I beseech you all reproaches spare,
To him who gives of all his best the sum.
The ready praise might come were you less fair;
Swift, empty speech were you less dear might come;
Your very loveliness is my despair,
It is my mighty love that makes me dumb.

IN VAIN.

The apple hangs ripe above my head,
  Ripe and red in the autumn prime;
But ah! the beautiful blossom is dead,
  We loved in the sweet May-time.

Bright and green was the waving field,
  In the happy promise time of the year;
The harvests are gathered, a fruitful yield,
  But the fields are brown and sere.

Ah, my little friend, can the ripened fruit
  Return to the bud? Can the yellow grain
Be once again the tender shoot?
  Sweetheart, it is all in vain.

Never doth Nature her laws forget;
  And I, with unquickened heart and breath,
Seeing the look in your eyes, regret
  The maturity which is death.

THE PERFECT GIFT.

I.

Such wondrous gifts are laid low at her feet;
  Jewels that glow and shine like living flame,
  And pearls that put the lily's cheek to shame,
And shining silken fabrics that are mete
For a queen's raiment, perfumes rare and sweet,
  And curious things that cunning fingers frame
  In far-off lands, and works of mighty fame
From pencil and from pen; these come to greet
Her on that happy day when Christ was born;
  When joyous praises fill the earth and skies,
    And heart to heart sends greeting fond and kind.
She turns away a weary smile of scorn
  On her sad lips and in her splendid eyes
    The look of one who seeks but does not find.

II.

And I have naught except this little rose
  Upon my breast; but I do surely hold
  It dearer than all gems that sparkle cold
Upon her weary brow. The deep sea flows

Over no gift so great, the wide earth knows
Nothing so fair, though wrought of finest gold.
Above its royal heart the petals fold
My perfect flower, in Heaven's own soil it grows.
I will not envy her her jewels rare,
Her filmy laces nor her fabrics fine.
Nor that wide path wherein 'tis her's to move,
For now my path shines most divinely fair,
And now life's utter blessedness is mine,
Since on my bosom blooms the rose of love.

III.

Life's greatest good with gold is never bought;
To-day amid all plentitude she stands
And with sad soul bemoans the barren lands.
Though to the altar all good gifts are brought,
Gold, frankincense and myrrh, lo, it is naught
If he who gives gives not at love's commands;
But I, my heart with happiness o'erfraught,
Cry out, "O Christmas bells, ring loud and clear,
Swell the glad song of joy and peace anew,
And with your praises all glad hearts uplift;
For now is life no longer bleak and drear,
But beautiful and grand because of you,
O rose of love! O perfect Christmas gift!"

THE BOND OF PAIN.

When the music your soul is so filled with
  Flowed out to the world glad and strong,
The heart of the great world was thrilled with
  The delight of your song.
But long ere the world paused to hear it,
  And yet while the dear lips were dumb,
I heard (for my soul was so near it),
  The music that burdened your spirit,
  And the songs that should come.

When your ships have come home heavy-laden
  With treasure repaying your pains,
The world, from the sage to the maiden,
  Has rejoiced in your gains.
But when by the storms overtaken,
  Your ships with their treasures went down,
'Twas then, by the fair winds forsaken,
  At your side with a courage unshaken,
    I faced the world's frown.

Now far in fame's uttermost regions
You stand in the light of the sun,
And hear the glad voices of legions
Hail the heights you have won.
But when by your cares overweighted,
You wept in the valley alone,
Or groped on the hillside, belated,
My heart with a faith unabated,
Clasped hands with your own.

You stand in the sunlighted distance,
And I in the Valley of Tears.
Between us, with weary insistence,
Lie the merciless years.
But I know, should the tempests surround you,
For the sound of my voice you would hark;
Unheeding the hands that would wound you,
You would reach through the dangers around you,
For my hand in the dark.

And so though the great world may claim you,
And hail you with pleasure and pride,
And so, though I never may name you,
Who should stand at your side;

Yet O! my beloved, forever
The bond 'twixt us two will remain;
All time with its ceaseless endeavor,
Is powerless to break it in twain;
Nor yet can eternity sever
This bond of our Sorrow and Pain.

LOVE'S WISDOM.

Upon the sacred feet of Him she loved,
  She poured the spikenard out, and kneeling there,
  She wiped the dear feet with her flowing hair.
And when the wise and cautious ones reproved
The lavished deed, saying, "It had behooved
  Her to have given this to the poor," He said,
  By His own love and tender mercy led,
"Nay, chide her not who to such deed is moved."

Tempest and flood and flame are better far
  Than even shrunken streams, or breezeless days,
Or safe, cold hearths. The wisest fears that bar
  The soul from generous deeds, the yeas and nays
Dictated by a selfish wisdom are
  Never so wise as love's unwisest ways.

UNPOSSESSED.

So many relics of the past,
  Ribbons and letters, curls and rings;
I'll burn them all, for in the mass
  Of tender, trivial, useless things,
There's not a single one to which
  A truly loving memory clings.

Some fleeting fancies; yes, of course,
  I am but human—let me see,
Here is a letter, here a glove,
  Perfumed and dainty as can be;
And here a picture, she who gave
Was once, she thought, in love with me.

And long ago, one summer night,
  My very foolish brain awhirl,
I clipped from off the snowy neck
  Of just the sweetest little girl,
In poet's parlance, this spun gold;
  In truth, this somewhat faded curl.

Was there not one among them all
So pretty, gentle, true and kind,
For whom I cared? In all the world
Of women could I never find
The queen of all, the perfect one,
Exactly suited to my mind?

A foolish question, friend, to ask;
Yes, there was one. She never gave
Me curl or kiss; I never touched
With lover's hand the rippling wave
Of her brown hair, although I longed
For her, as thirsty mortals crave

Cool water; but she could not give
Her love my wayward life to bless.
And so it is that I have not
A relic, ribbon, ring or tress
Of hers; the one great gift denied,
All other gifts were valueless.

Yet do I tell you this, my friend,
That far, aye, very far above
All thought of any offering
Of others—ring, or curl, or glove—
I dearer hold her gentle *No*,
The calm denial of my love.

Love her for what she could not give?
Perhaps—I say it to my shame—
But as these previous treasures go
To feed my fire's expiring flame,
So, also, it is my belief
Hers would have perished just the same.

So all is well. I have this love
Shrined sacredly within my breast;
A rare, sweet presence that I know
Is perfect, since 'tis unpossessed.
She has her life, serene and pure,
Unspoiled by mine—and that is best.

THE DEFENDER.

Care came and laid his hand upon her shoulder;
And Sorrow came, her lids with salt tears wet;
And Pain, with features marred, and white and set,
Pressed to her side; and then, stern-visaged, gaunt,
Frightening her shaken soul, unpitying Want
Stared in her face; at last, grown bolder,
By all these ills, Temptation—smiling, fair—
Spread for her weary feet a charmed snare
With tender, cruel hand. So cold the world!
All her weak soul in a strange tempest whirled;
With whitened lips, and sad, imploring breath
She stretches out her helpless hand to death.

Then lo! one came before whose radiant grace
Sorrow grew dumb, and gaunt Care hid his face;
Before whose presence, radiant as the day,
Temptation, vexed and beaten, fled away.

For whose dear sake she trembled at the thought
Of Death, whose pallid kiss she fain had sought.
With a strange rapture, holy, restful, sweet,
Against her own she felt a true heart beat.
"Oh, life!" she cried, "no ill of thine can hold me,
Since Love, the mighty, in his arms doth fold me."

ASHAMED.

Ashamed of loving so? Why should I be?
My heart turned toward you as a rose to June;
And I was sure that some time — late or soon —
You, too, would feel your own soul drawn to me,
As evermore the restless, changeful sea
Is led and lifted by the pure white moon.
I deemed your love would be so great a boon,
That only in its bonds would I be free.
And now you say if I had been less true,
If, meaning yes, instead had answered nay,
If, loving much, had turned my face away,
I then had grown the dearer unto you.
Nor am I ashamed, indeed, that I have loved
A man so small of soul as you are proved.

LOVE AMONG THE LILIES.

Out on the river's gentle tide
Our boat is riding.
I hold the oars, but Lily's eyes
Do all the guiding.

We row out where the lilies grow.
I own her will is
Mine, too; and now she has a will
For water lilies.

I heap the blossoms till she sits
Amid their whiteness,
Like the fair moon amid the stars,
Dimming their brightness.

Her hand is whiter than the white
Of the rare blossom;
Her hair more golden than the gold
Hid in its bosom.

Her eyes! The stars are not so bright,
The skies not bluer.
And you might search the wide world o'er,
Nor find eyes truer.

Such glorious eyes! But then, maybe,
I sit too near her;
At greater distance from their light
I might see clearer.

The flowers yield their perfume up
Before the maiden;
With rarer incense than their breath
The boat is laden.

For, mid the fragrance and the bloom,
This tender thrill is
Assurance sweet that love is hid
Among the lilies.

I love and bless you evermore,
Fair sisters of the river;
The one white lily of you all
Is mine forever.

The summer night enfolds us in
A happy silence;
Our little boat has touched, at last,
Life's blessed islands.

IN UTTER WANT.

I am poor; I am poor;
If I came to beg at your door,
You would say: she has jewels and gold;
This is a lie she has told.
But I say it o'er and o'er,
I am poor; I am poor.

I am poor; I am poor;
I am hungering and thirsting sore.
But the bread and wine I need,
True bread and wine indeed,
I can not ask at your door,
Though I be always poor.

There's a rose in her bonny hair;
I saw you place it there,
With tender, loving hand.
Ah! now can you understand,
The woman who cries evermore,
I am poor: I am poor?

JEALOUSY.

They stood upon the wide veranda, and
  Before he left her side I saw him turn
  And take for her from out the vine-hung urn,
A crimson rose, and with a deferent hand,
He placed it in the soft hair's silky strand.
  Then in my soul did a fierce longing burn,
  And a new madness, swift and keen and stern,
Arose and held me in its strong command.

And then — O blessed then! — I saw her take
  A white rose from the white breast where it slept,
And with a proud but timid courage, lift
  It to her lips. For joy I could have wept —
For joy hath tears. The white rose was my gift!

THROUGH TIME AND ETERNITY.

I have done at last with the bitter lie—
  The lie I have lived so many years.
I've hated myself that I could not die,
  Body as well as soul. What! tears?—
Tears and kisses on lip and brow!
  What use are tears and kisses now?

'Twas not so hard, just a kerchief wet
  In the deadly blessing that quiets pain;
And backward the tide of suffering set—
  Peace swept over the blood and brain—
Utter peace to the finger tips,
  And now these kisses on lids and lips.

Sweet caresses for lips all cold,
  And loud laments for perished breath,
For the faded cheek, and the hair's dim gold—
  But not a tear for the sadder death
I died that day. How strange the fate
  That brings your sorrow all too late.

All these years with my dead, dead heart,
I've met the world with smiling eyes;
I feigned sweet life with perfect art,
And the world has respect for well-told lies;
And I fooled the world, for no one said:
"Behold this woman—she is dead."

And no one said as you passed along,
"Behold a murderer!" No one knew;
You carefully covered the cruel wrong;
That the world saw not was enough for you;
You had wisdom and worldly pride,
And I had silence—for I had died.

The world says now I am dead; but Oh!
Lean down and listen—'tis all in vain;
Again in my breast bleeds the cruel blow—
Again I am mad with the old-time pain;
Again the waves of anguish roll,
For I have met with my murdered soul.

Oh! never to find the peace I crave—
'Twere better to be as I have been;

In the place of the fleeting years I have
  Eternity now to love you in;
Eternity now to feel the blow
  Your dear hands gave so long ago.

LOVE'S MEANING.

I thought it meant all glad ecstatic things;
Fond glance, and touch and speech, quick blood and brain,
And strong desire and sweet delicious pain,
And beauty's thrall and strange bewilderings
'Twixt hope and fear — like to the little stings
The rose thorn gives — and then the utter gain,
Worth all my sorest strivings to attain,
Of the dear bliss long-sought possession brings.

Now, with a sad, keen sight that reassures
My often sinking soul, with longing eyes
Averted from the path that still allures —
Lest seeing that for which my sore heart sighs
I seek my own good at the cost of yours,
I know at last that love means sacrifice.

A FRAGMENT.

As there be those who in midsummer days,
When roses open wide their honeyed hearts,
And passionate carnations, spicy-sweet,
Fling lavish fragrance to the careless winds,
And red geraniums, soulless, beautiful,
Like torches burn upon the pulsing air,
Will still love best the softly gorgeous bloom
Of pansy beds, or in the lily's face,
Waxen and pallid, will find tender grace
That satisfies, or, of their own glad choice,
Will make a breast-knot of the heliotrope—
The simple flower great Helios loves the best,
So, best-beloved, in the wider paths
Where human blossoms charm and woo and win,
'Tis just the same. And now my clover-bloom,
The chosen of my soul, whereon my heart
Leans like a tired child forevermore,
Look in my eyes and say that you are glad.

STORMS STRENGTHENED.

There lies a doubt upon your soul to-day,
  My little friend, and I within your clear,
  Untutored eyes do read the nameless fear,
And bid you put the torturing thought away.
True, there be little fickle souls that say
  That love lives only with the loved one near;
  But question your own self, so all-sincere,
And tell me if they say aright.
    Nay, nay.

The wind that puts the little taper out
  In utter darkness only serves to blow
  The raging flame into a fiercer heat.
So that dread absence, which beyond a doubt
Doth kill small love, such large love as we know,
  Can only make more strong and true and sweet.

THE ANSWER.

Another life beyond? It must be so,
  Once I, too, doubted; but—yes, you will read
  My heart in this—I've learned the perfect creed.
I do believe in love, and now I know,
(So clear a wisdom does this faith bestow.)
  That life which foretime for its every need
  Seemed great enough, seems now too small, indeed,
For aught so great as love. Beloved, go
  And learn straightway the same sweet lore of this
    Same mighty teacher. Once the marvel wrought,
    Once the true lesson learned, thy soul enfraught
  With the strange, masterful, pervading bliss,
And face to face with its own doubting brought
Will find within itself the answer sought.

STONES FOR BREAD.

I gave the sweetest sweet,
The choicest fruits that in rich soils do grow;
Happy to lay the precious offering so,
At your dear feet.

Of gold a goodly store,
In life's fierce furnace seven times tried;
Whose flame-perfected beauty should abide,
Forevermore.

And myrrh and frankincense,
And all the treasure I had haply won
From life's wide fields; for shadow, storm and sun,
The gracious recompense.

Even the leaf of bay
Upon my brow, fame's little fickle bloom,
If so I could I would have plucked therefrom
And given to you straightway.

I gave my best; gave all
With lavish hand, and then was sad because
All that I gave seemed poor and full of flaws,
And pitifully small.

So far above,
And dwarfing all, fame, sweetness, fruit and gold,
Was that great giving which all else doth hold,
An utter love.

You gave me what!
'Tis just the world-old story, quickly told.
Gall for my wine, dross for my gold,
And yet my lot,

With all its pain,
I would not change for yours; what heavier cross
Than to have *naught to give?* Ah! yours the loss
And mine the gain.

FISHERMAN JOHN AND FISHERMAN JACK.

Fisherman John is brave and strong,
  None more brave on the coast than he.
He owns a cottage and fishing smack,
  Snug as ever need be.
And what is truer than I could wish,
  Fisherman John loves me.

Often and often when day is done,
  With smiling lips and eager eyes,
He comes to woo me; in every way
  That a man may try, he tries
To win me, but that he can never do,
  Though he woo me till he dies.

Fisherman Jack is a poorer man;
  He owns not cottage nor fishing smack,
But a winning voice and smile has he,
  And a warm, true heart; Alack!
Why should it grieve me so to tell
  That I love Fisherman Jack?

He loves not me, but every night
  He sits at the feet of Kate Mahone;
Never a smile has she for him,
  For she loves Fisherman John,
Who cares no more for love of hers
  Than the sea he sails upon.

Often we wonder, do Kate and I,
  That fate should cross us so cruelly,
We think of the lovers we do not love,
  And dream of what life would be,
If only Fisherman John loved her,
  And Fisherman Jack loved me.

SINCE LOVE HATH COME.

Of old I said when Love shall come to me,
  It will not be as master nor as king,
  He rather will the humblest service bring
Whereby to prove his utter loyalty.

When Love shall come to me again, I said,
  I'll ask what fitting offering has he brought,
  What noble gift of word, or deed, or thought,
To lay down at my feet; but now, instead,

I do not say, what can Love do to prove
  His fealty and worth? I rather cry,
  What can I do that's good and great and high
Enough to prove my worthiness of Love?

Since Love hath come I seek to make my life
  More free than ever from all soil or blame;
  As true as truth, as warm and clean as flame,
With faith serene, with strength and sweetness rife.

Since Love hath come my happy voice essays
A nobler song, more strong and true and free,
Trusting that in its music there will be
Some strain whereof dear Love may speak in praise.

O Love! that maketh selfishness to bow
Before sweet sacrifice, that doth transmute
Life's dross to gold, its barrenness to fruit,
Where is the king on earth so great as thou?

ONE YEAR AGO.

RONDEAU.

One year ago we sat where tall trees made
Above our heads a sympathizing shade.
The world was all in bloom; the ambient air
Pulsed with the summer; round us everywhere
Beauty had raised its perfect palisade.

We saw the blue sky through the green arcade;
The birds and breezes sang our serenade;
That happy day, that day beyond compare,
One year ago.

We saw each other's souls; from joy afraid,
We turned away to do as duty bade;
O Love, the sweet, sad knowledge that we share,
Has made all days since then more dear and fair
Though Silence on our lips her finger laid,
One year ago.

AUF WIEDERSEHEN.

A day of perfect summer grace, where green boughs
meet and interlace,
A sky of perfect summer blue, the yellow sunshine
sifting through;
And all above and all around, uprising from the teem-
ing ground,
Pulsing upon the happy breeze, on billowy crests of
green wheat seas,
Pouring from out the robin's throat, from fleecy cloud
and hill remote,
On shadows cool, and soft, and fleet, on waves of
trembling, quivering heat,
From over fields of clover-blooms, from out the dim
wood's fragrant glooms,
Such miracles of color glow — such spicy, subtle odors
flow,
Such sounds, fine, deep, tumultuous; so Nature fills
her cup for us,

And we, through every quickening sense, drink it with grateful reverence;
O happy draught unmixed with bane! This have we, dear, Auf Wiederseh'n.

O smiling skies! O shadows fleet! O day of days so bitter sweet!
O hungry hearts unsatisfied, the bread and wine of Life denied!
O kindling eye and glowing cheek! O longing lips forbid to speak!
O silence mightier far than speech! O souls that signal each to each!
O sorrow sweet! O joy that stands bereft amid the fruitful lands!
O love pierced through and through with pain! These are our own Auf Wiederseh'n.

Auf Wiederseh'n! When will that be? God knows, dear one — God knows, not we;
But Oh! till then, or soon or late, Faith holds our hands and bids us wait;
Bethink you, dear, how it will be when that day comes to you and me;

How exiled Joy will come with hands ready to fill
our glad commands,
How care and doubt will flee away! and peace abide
with us that day!
How Love, the deathless, starry-eyed, will clasp and
and keep us undenied;
How Life will turn upon its track, and Youth the
blessed will come back.

Whether the royal June shall hold the Earth within
its gracious fold,
Or Winter's icy hand be pressed upon her mute, in-
sensate breast,
Still all our pulses—O my sweet—will thrill with
Summer when we meet;
And in the rapture so supreme, the past will vanish
like a dream.
O faithful heart, in loss or pain, remember this, Auf
Wiederseh'n.

WHY?

I did not love him; long ago
Instead of Yes I gave him No.

I did not love him. But to-day,
I read his marriage notice—pray,

Why was I sad, when never yet
Has my heart known the least regret

Over that whispered No, and why,
Reading the notice, should I sigh?

No analyst can guess the cause,
A woman's reason laughs at laws.

Sure I am glad to know the wound
I gave, is healed, that he has found

Love's blessedness and peace, and yet,
A woman never can forget

The man who once has loved her, and
To-day I seem to see him stand

With every glance a mute caress,
Still pleading for the longed-for Yes.

His early love for me is dead,
Another lives in that love's stead,

And if he loves her well, as men
Should love their chosen ones, why then

He must be glad that long ago,
Instead of Yes I gave him No.

Perhaps that is the reason why
I read the notice with a sigh.

RENUNCIATION.

Both bird and cage were fair,
  And both belonged to me;
And ever with longing eyes
  The bird looked over the sea.
Within their tender depths
  Shone ever a wild unrest—
Ever against the bars
  It beat its beautiful breast.

I said I will make its cage
  So bright and glad and gay
With all that love can do,
  It can not choose but stay.
In vain, with all my art,
  Still it was plain to me
That ever with longing eyes
  My bird looked over the sea.

Then I said I will hold it close—
  Surely it is my right—

I will hold this precious joy,
If not by love, by might.
In vain, though mine the power
To hold or set it free,
Not mine to hold its heart,
That ever escaped from me.

Then I said, "Be free, O bird,
To spread your beautiful wings;
Who cares for the song unless
'Tis also the heart that sings?
For the glance of eyes that shine,
If shining they also rove?
For the snowiest breast if ne'er
It beat with the pulse of love?

Wide I opened the door,
But I turned my face away;
For men are weak sometimes,
Whatever the world may say.
A thrill of joy rang out
From a joyful, songful breast;
A flash of wings—alas!
No need to tell the rest.

My bird will never come back,
  Yet why should I weep or sigh,
If only the thing I loved
  Has entered its native sky?
It will never come back, I know,
  But who his love to prove,
Is willing to be forgot,
  Stand on the height of love.

MISTAKEN.

Together through the afternoon's sweet hour
They sat upon the porch; the grape vine turned
To cooling shade the sultry heat that burned
The distant meadows. Red geranium flowers

Flamed down the path, no beauty of the scene
Was lost to him; he saw the yellowing grain,
The little cloud that promised gift of rain,
The purple bloom amid the vines' dark green,

And all the queenly summer's glow and grace;
He heard the fine small sounds dull ears do miss—
The while he spoke or read of that or this;
And she—she heard his voice, she saw his face.

She listened with her soul the while he read;
Never before was poet's song so dear,
Never was subtle reasoning so clear;
And so—and so the happy moments sped.

He closed the book; the day was dying; in
The West the sky was one great bank of gold,
As though a world's pure sunshine all were rolled
Into one mass; he said, "This day has been

Most perfect and most dear; I grieve that I
Shall see its like no more, because I go
Away to-morrow. Ah, you did not know?
To-morrow, friend, and this, this is good-bye."

Saying good-bye again, he turned away,
Pausing to look out to the West; no flaw
Was in the perfect sunset that he saw,
To her its gold had turned to dullest gray.

What was amiss that she should seek her room,
And thrust the book of poems from her sight?
And from her breast as though it were a blight,
Tear angrily his gift of fragrant bloom?

What was amiss? Let any woman say,
Who for true love has read its every token,
Nor dreamed that cautious lips could leave unspoken
All that the truthless eyes had told so well.

DEAD.

I am dead! Will not that suffice?
  Though you rain sweet kisses, I will not awake.
Do you grudge to the grave a prize?
  There are still strong hearts to ache and break.

Do you think you can thrill me again
  With your eyes' soft light and your forehead fair?
Do you think you can turn my brain
  With your round white throat and your gold-brown
    hair?

Do you come to undo the work
  That Death has done after years of pain?
In your heart does a wonder lurk,
  That a life should escape from your charmèd chain?

There is no more sport for you here;
  Your part was done on that summer day
Long ago. I have naught to fear.
  Weave your subtle charms, O my siren gay,

For living men; no more for me;
Take your eyes from my dead white face, I pray.
O woman! woman! can you not see
There's a murder stain on that summer day?

LILACS.

The same sweet blossoms year by year
  Come back with gracious greeting;
This little purple cluster here
  Sets all my pulses beating;
Not with the passion typified
  By the red rose's splendor,
But with the memories that bide
  With Time, the true and tender.

With these dear blossoms in my hand
  Some miracle hath found me.
I walk in childhood's happy land
  With sunshine all around me.
The flowers bloom, the waters flow,
  The singing birds are mated,
And over wide fields to and fro
  The winds blow, fragrance-freighted.

And while I look the years glide on,
  And I, a loving maiden,

Again beneath a summer moon
  Stand in a lover's Aiden.
Upon the bosom of my gown
  I wear the purple beauty,
While tender eyes in mine look down,
  And love is one with duty.

When to his door, a happy bride,
  I made my glad home-coming,
The little path on either side
  Was fragrant with their blooming.
On every path my feet have traced
  Their heartsome perfume lingers;
They were the first flowers that I placed
  Within my baby's fingers.

As all of life's delight they crowned
  With odorous completeness,
So on the brow of death they bound
  Their anadem of sweetness.
Above the still and faithful breast,
  Where his own wishes bid them,
I placed the flowers that he loved best,
  And left my heart amid them.

In all life's storm and stress and fret,
  Its working and its waiting,
How light the touches are that set
  Its sweetest chord vibrating!
O Youth! O love! O childhood sweet!
  O dearer days departed!
Within your magic bloom they meet,
  O Lilacs, honey-hearted.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Do you remember that day, my dear
(Oh, I shall remember until I die),
That wonderful day of a vanished year
When under the green of a leafy sky,
With Nature singing her sweetest tune,
We sat through the long, glad afternoon?

Oh, fair was the world on that perfect day,
With song and color and shade and shine;
With growing grain and with meadows gay,
With odors delicate, fresh and fine;
With the soft, low music of mated birds,
With the calm content of the grazing herds.

Never a word did we say of love
As we sat in the happy shadows there;
But we heard its voice in the boughs above,
We felt its breath on the pulsing air·
In the silence sweeter far than speech,
Our heart beats answered each to each.

Still is your hand like the lily leaf,
With the sea-shell's tint at the finger tips;
Your hair had the gold of the gathered sheaf,
Still like a rose are your dewy lips;
And I know in my soul that to-day you are
Sweeter and dearer than then by far.

Yet I remember, my love, so well,
A subtle something about you then
Beyond the power of my words to tell,
That never has seemed to come back again.
And I would give more than I dare to say,
For the look your dear face wore that day.

Was it, my dear, a flush of the cheek,
A quiver of lash or a droop of lid?
A tremble of lips that dared not speak
The truth that deep in the heart was hid?
Nay, the look that over your features stole
Was the strange sweet sign of a waking soul.

May comes never but once a year,
This is the summer, and well we know

Fulfillment is better than promise, dear,
Better it is that the oak should grow,
Though the acorn die; the rosebud's doom
We quite forget in the rose's bloom.

Richly the sun of your summers beams,
Though May comes not to your life again;
And, darling, the something that haunts my dreams,
I know with a joy that is half a pain,
That wonderful waking May-time grace,
Her lover has found in our daughter's face.

FAILURE.

Long ago you said to me, "Sweet,
A glorious kingdom before you lies;"
You pointed it out to my willing feet,
You lighted the way with your loving eyes.

Many the triumphs the years have brought;
Keen the pleasures, but keener the pain.
I stand by your side in the realm of thought,
And I ask myself, is it loss or gain?

You give to me generous meed of praise,
You give to me honor and trust I know;
But you think with regret of my simpler ways
My fond unwisdom of long ago.

Though I speak with the wisdom of gods and men
(This is the bitter that spoils my sweet),
I know full well that never again,
Can I quicken your pulse by a single beat.

You are not to blame—there is naught to be said;
  Ever by fate is our planning crossed,
I did the best that I could, love-led,
  For the sake of winning what I have lost.

EVEN UNTO DEATH.

"It is so soft and beautiful," he said,
"So rich and plentiful; each wave and braid
Is dear to me. I think if I were dead
I should sleep sweeter if there could be laid
The pillow of your tresses 'neath my head.—

These tresses that I love." At last there fell
The blow long threatened. 'Twas not hers to weep
Above her fallen lord; she might not tell
Her sorrow where the less beloved keep
Their watch, although they knew her grief full well.

Remembering only what they called her shame,
Forgetting all the love she gave and won,
The love that such despite to her fair fame
Through long, enduring, faithful years had done,
They banished her in virtue's deadly name.

But she remembered how, when young and fair,
Behind the convent gates she owned love's thrall,

Crying, "O God, forbid that I should dare
To love him more than I love Thee," and all
The bliss and bane of that unanswered prayer.

Then, with a solemn joy, she loosed the band
That bound the shining glory of her hair;
Each wave and braid and little rippling strand—
She loved it well, for he had called it fair—
She severed with a quick, unfaltering hand.

And then she sent it, saying, "This I do
Because he wished it," unto those who kept
Their watch beside the dead; and they, although
They had no pity for the tears she wept,
Were great enough to say, "It shall be so."

And thus, 'tis said, the satin pillow where
They laid the great Czar's head for its last rest
Held the bright beauty of her perfect hair—
Love's fond fulfilling of love's fond behest.
I wonder does he know, and does he care?

VIVIEN.

About her lissome limbs the samite clings,
And in her hair I see the snake of gold;
I meet her glances, sweet and soft and bold,
And in mine ear her songs of love she sings.
Low at my feet her trustless trust she flings.
I know her well. 'Tis she who fold on fold,
In days long gone 'round Merlin wise and old
Wrapped all her subtle charms; sweet threatenings,
And tears and smiles. Dead? Vivien dead? Why,
You and I and all men for her sake
Daily forget ourselves, and every day
Do hear the cry, "O, Fool!" She will not die
While there is still in man a heart to break,
A brain to turn, a soul to lead astray.

THE ROSE OF A DEAD JUNE.

The love that holds her in its arms she has no thought
of wronging,
For any life apart from it she has no dream nor
longing;
But by a glad content possessed, she leans her heart
upon its breast.

She takes with loving, grateful hand the bounties that
it brings her;
She listens with calm pleasure to the praiseful songs
it sings her;
She loves the tenderness profound that like a gar-
ment wraps her round.

For all this generous trust and truth, this self-absorbing
passion,
She makes a full and sweet return in lavish woman
fashion;
Filled with all gracious, loyal thought, she dreams
not of withholding aught.

And yet, sometimes, above the songs upon her glad ears falling,
Across the silence of the years she hears a low voice calling;
She walks beneath a vanished moon, she wears the rose of a dead June.

Just for a moment living love has lost its hold upon her;
Just for a moment perished joy from present bliss has won her;
And, all her soul in chaos whirled, she stands in a forgotten world.

Strong are the bonds of flesh, but Oh! beyond all understanding,
She owns the spirit's bold behest, the masterful commanding,
That bids her seek through time and space her soul's deserted trysting-place.

THE ETERNAL BOND.

Though I loose my hand from yours and go
  Away from you bitter-hearted,
And we say it is best, do you think that so
  We two can be truly parted?

The midnight sky and the stars' bright beam,
  Are forever and ever mated;
The mingled waves of sea and stream
  Can never be separated.

The words we speak as we loose our hands
  With hearts that bleed and quiver,
Are just as futile as such commands
  Would be to the sea and river.

Still, forever the bond endures
  With resolute sad persistence;
And never a word of mine or yours
  Can will it out of existence.

Though I loose my hand and say good-bye,
In vain is my weak decreeing;
There is no power can break the tie
That is one with our very being.

Yea, love can smite us, or wound, or kill,
Yet loveless is each the loser;
Ah God, sweet heart, be it well or ill,
We must still clasp hands the closer.

A THANKSGIVING.

'Twas many a year ago, dear, 'twas many a year ago,
You sat in the singer's seat, dear, and I in the pew below,
And the parson preached and prayed, dear, and bade the faithful raise
To God a true thanksgiving of earnest prayer and praise.

To me the year just ended had brought no dole or dearth;
The fire was burning brightly upon my lonely hearth;
I had seen the spring's glad promise 'neath the summer's smile unfold,
I had seen the harvests gathered when the green had turned to gold.

I knew that, counting treasures by every outward sign,
Many a man might envy the blessings that were mine;

They saw my fertile acres, they saw my gathered store,
With such a fair inheritance, what could a man ask more?

But I listened to the preaching in no glad Thanksgiving mood,
For my life was sadly empty, though the harvests had been good;
For what to me were flocks and herds, or bursting barn and bin,
When the treasure I'd have died for was the one I could not win?

I can see you, dear, this moment, as you looked that very day;
See the roses in your bonnet, see the simple gown of gray,
See the tenor close beside you, what a handsome man was he!
I could see his tender glances; 'twas a bitter sight to me.

How I envied that poor tenor! how I hated him, I
own,
As your voices in the anthem rose and mingled into
one;
I'd have given, as I stood there, for the music in his
throat,
All the best of my possessions, and I could not sing
a note.

And when the service ended, and we heard the last
amen,
I waited in the entry—that is what we called it then—
And our eyes met just a moment, and your glance,
dear, was so kind,
That, although the handsome tenor followed but a
step behind,

I dared to walk beside you, down the steps and
through the gate,
And then, a little further, where our paths should
separate;
I sought your eyes again, dear, with a question in
my own.
And so it came about, dear, that we neither walked
alone.

Home through the sombre woodland we strolled that happy day,
And it seemed the sun was shining from the very sky of May;
Though the dead leaves whirled about us, yet the world seemed all in bloom,
And our fond hearts thrilled with summer through the autumn's chilling gloom.

And we won a happy knowledge, you and I, dear, each from each,
Heavenly sweet the revelations of our silence or our speech.
I, who had not dared to hope, dear, with a wonder glad and swift,
Lifted up a great thanksgiving for this gift of every gift.

And we laughed about the tenor, with his voice so strong and true,
And my envy turned to pity, as a lucky man's will do;
For I knew he'd gladly barter all the music that should roll
From his singing throat henceforward for the song within my soul.

All the wealth I had not cared for in a blissful instant grew
Very precious, since the future was to see it shared with you.
But naught that I could give you, well I knew, could ever be
Such a priceless, gracious giving as the gift you gave to me.

And the day, begun so sadly, ended in a dream of bliss
That has lasted all the years, dear, from that happy hour to this;
Through life's smiles and tears, my darling, 'neath the skies of blue or gray,
We have thanked the dear God always for that blest Thanksgiving day.

FOR THE OLD LOVE'S SAKE.

Come to me love, from your wand'ring ways.
How, I pray, can you longer rove?
Come for the sake of the dear old days,
And the dear old love.

I will not ask where your feet have strayed,
What sin or weakness your soul has known;
Nor that for the wounds your hands have made,
With penance you should atone

I will not ask what the world may give
Of praise or blame, though there should not be
A priest in the world your soul to shrive,
That would be naught to me.

If only back to me, tender and true,
Penitent, loving and glad you come,
Of all the wrongs that were wrought by you,
I will be dumb.

Come to me, loving and all my own,
For soon the sun of our life will set,
Come and the sorrows that we have known
We will forget

Come to me love, from your wand'ring ways,
Do not longer a moment rove.
Come for the sake of the dear old days,
And the dear old love.

THE KING.

Love came and knocked; I opened wide to him;
My house was swept and garnished, fit and fair
For his dear coming; with glad eyes, made dim
With solemn joy, I bade him enter there.

When lo! with sad, insistent footsteps, stole
Sorrow, white-faced, with ashes in her hair;
Following with anxious eyes and voice of dole,
And furrowed brow, came heavy-laden Care.

With open palm, unbeautiful and hard,
And heavy lids, Toil strode across the floor;
Then Pain with pallid features, anguish-marred,
And tearful haggard gaze, looked through the door.

Seeing all these my weak soul was afraid;
I railed at Love's pretense and bade him go.
He looked on his pale followers undismayed,
Then in mine eyes and said: "Nay, child, not so.

"Lo! I am Love, the master I despoil
Care of her kingdom; whereso'er I reign
I lift up Sorrow's eyes, transfigure Toil,
And put glad songs upon the lips of Pain."

Made strong, I said, "Dear Love, I make my choice,
Abide with me whate'er that choice may bring,
And then they cried, these dread ones, with one voice,
"Lo! Love is King. Yea Love indeed is King!"

ETERNAL.

Love is eternal; so the strong souls say,
  But seeing how hard life doth give the lie
  Unto the mighty words, with sneer or sigh,
The weaker ones cry out in sad dismay
That love is changeful as an April day,
  Holding within itself no strength whereby
  It can the subtle shafts of time defy,
And to the soul of man abide alway.

Not every heart is great enough to hold
  A great immortal tenant. Love hath fled
Always from natures narrow, weak and cold.
  Know when by scornful lips you hear it said
That Love is traitor, that the truth is told
  Not of dear Love, but of that soul instead.